

# This Old House

11  
PAGES OF  
Kitchen  
& Bath  
IDEAS

SEPTEMBER 2006

## Design the perfect remodel

- ▶ An open, airy bath for two
- ▶ A colorful kitchen
- ▶ A cottage masterpiece

how to add  
character with  
crown molding

outdoor lighting:  
options and  
installation

before + after  
bungalow makeover  
PAGE 92

COLLECTOR'S  
ISSUE

## Our 101 Best-Ever Homeowner Tips

FROM BATHS TO BUDGETS TO BEADBOARD PAGE 98

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## letter FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

### Homeowner Tips to Live By

NEVER PICK A FIGHT WITH A MONEY, who's ripped off his duper and has a half-empty vodka bottle in his hand.

Then you go—my contribution to the 131st issue of *This Old House* and its special feature, "Older 101: Best-Live Homeowner Tips." Granted, if you're at all like me, you're not going to be able to take advantage of that wisdom more than once or twice as a lifetime, but at all I've got. In the story that begins on page 98, though, there's plenty more down the road. And it's practical, too—while whoever I'll help you as long as you live with me well, a window, and a roof.

You want to learn how to paint a house? It's done. Avoid single-entrance emergency repair bills! Included. Get savvy as to the best months for buying land! Yep. Altogether you're never going to find such information in any other home magazine. The skilled writers and editors and real-world trouble-shooters who have contributed to *This Old House* for the last 15 years even offer you how to heat the room in your home in which you'll spend the most time asked. That's pretty important in terms of comfort.

In the 13 pages that make up our special, you'll learn how to engage in a down DIY task or how to talk to someone who's not for you. You'll also learn, get right, avoid mistakes, and save money. That's what I'm doing in the picture at right—moving money I'm doing my own demo (top number 34), salvaging a tin ceiling panel before the contractor shows up to start a remodel in my house. I'll note that ceiling somewhere. I'd better, because truth be told, in taking a cleverly wiggled-in sharp edge clear through an unseen 220-volt line, I don't know how or why I wasn't electrocuted, but I do know it was an experience that left me with, perhaps, one more useful piece of advice. As a homeowner you may already know it: Always be brave, pray to the gods for luck, and don't stop reading *TOH*. Because, while we may not be able to save you from electrocution, we can pretty much guarantee we're the only ones who will help you face down a ripey champagne.

*Sen. Casanova*

EGGIE O'NEILL/ALAN  
GUSTAF



In taking the panel down, I wiggled its edge clear through a 220-volt line. The experience left me with a useful piece of advice: Pray for luck.



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## mail



### Do-It-Yourself Humor

I have not laughed out loud so much at any other article as "Home Improvement" did at Chuck Fickler's comical essay on his father's propensity for using small tools and child labor ("Any Tool Will Do: A Family's House, June). Loved it! And then I realized: who's this guy Chuck Fickler? I hope you never lost him when he got out of jail and jail him to become a regular contributor. Thanks for this and for the article on solar shingles ("Green House, June). I was actually thinking of letting my subscription lapse, but this issue just got me to renew!

CLARA DONOHUE, BYE MAH,



### Cause-Clearing Station

I was glad to see the remodelers people have worked on their remodeling ("See Spot Shower" June). Our "paw-rolling station" and the back door needed to be high enough for anyone by middle age. Above is a photo of our design. (That's Toby, Jay, and Casey showing off it!) The kitchen has pulled out really do the trick.

For those who think about having a bathtub, just spend a muddy season washing a Lab's wet bottom using a cat's claws and a bucket! WATCHDOG: JEFFREY HIGGINS, MDH.

### Uncaring History at Home

As a professional archaeologist, I want to commend you for your neoclassical machine: classical remains found by a homeowner in Pennsylvania ("Digging for Buried Treasures," Around the House, June). Archaeological material is

a nonrenewable cultural resource. Looting and the collection of artifacts by inexperienced individuals is irresponsible. By archaeologists and landowners. Archaeology belongs to us all and it is ours to be stewards of the past. Your article helped readers to realize that taking a responsible approach to looting and allows the whole community to better understand its history. CANTON, MASSACHUSETTS PROJECT MANAGER CHRISTINE MURPHY/ONE OF MAJOR RIDGE, GEORGIA

### corrections

"See Spot Shower" June: the win lottery that the designer for the cat club it should be credited to Lee Stone and Rob Smith. Award: Stone Design, Tucson, AZ 520-630-3303

### Oh my to reach us

THE EDITOR: Address: The Do-It-Yourself House, 1000 Avenue of the Americas, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10020-6460. E-mail: [editor@diyhouse.com](mailto:editor@diyhouse.com). Please include your full name, address, and telephone number. For distribution or other related to the magazine, please contact the editorial office. Editorial office: 1000 Avenue of the Americas, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10020-6460. E-mail: [editor@diyhouse.com](mailto:editor@diyhouse.com)

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**SAFE BEGES**

**FURNITURE TIP ALERT**



More than 8,000 people, mostly children, are injured every year when TVs, dressers, and bookcases tip over on top of them, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. To prevent future accidents, makers of Casper's are pushing for new regulations that would force furniture and appliance makers to comply with new safety standards. Among the requirements are tests to make sure heavy objects can withstand unreasonable amount of jostling without tipping, and packaging for proper lines with restraining devices. —*David Hovet*

Here's what you can do now to deal with this danger:

- ▲ Place heavy electronics on shelves made of solid shelves. The lower center of gravity makes the shelves less likely to tip.
- ▲ Install locking devices on dresser drawers so children won't be able to pull them open and climb up. Safety 1st Ultra Secure Cabinet & Drawer Locks are \$3.49 at Target.

Wall-anchoring using others' wall anchors is less than \$5 for the local hardware store.



**GETTING GOING**

**Q** Back to the day: you had to be pretty strong to get a grip on the plumbing tools. Does the grip struggle with the kids' tools? **A** Yes, the kids' tools are designed to be used to install a pipe, but not to work on it. The kids' tools are designed to be used to install a pipe, but not to work on it. The kids' tools are designed to be used to install a pipe, but not to work on it.

Do what your old friend would do: use a pipe wrench.

A. 3056 S. 10th St. D. 1070

Clark's Organics (p. 10)

**30 USES**

**Pencil**



John Steinbeck used 300 pencils to write *East of Eden*, and no doubt, Thomas Jefferson used a pencil to write the Declaration of Independence. But a pencil is also a great tool for many other things. Here are 30 uses for a pencil.

**Use it to:**

1. Start a plant. Mark the wood of a sapling in an orchard to mark the spot for a new plant. Use the pencil to mark the wood of a sapling in an orchard to mark the spot for a new plant.

2. Plug a hole. TGM general contractor Tom Givens uses a pencil to fill a hole in a wall. He cuts the pencil into 1/4-inch pieces, glues them in place, and uses it to fill the hole.

3. Grab stuff like two pencils like chopsticks to remove a screw that's stuck in a hole. Push the pencil into the hole and use it to remove the screw.

4. Lubricate. Rub graphite shavings onto a key's jagged edge or a drill bit's end to make it easier to turn. Graphite is a natural lubricant.

5. Fix a door. If a door is sticking, push the pencil into the gap between the door and the frame. The pencil will act as a wedge.

6. Duplicate a pattern. Place paper on an unfinished wall and use a pencil to transfer the details of a pattern.

7. Rub out grease. Rub a pencil eraser over a grease stain on a wall. The eraser will remove the grease.

8. Perimeter marker. When installing a new tile or a new floor, use a pencil to mark the perimeter of the new floor.

9. Get the grip. Place a pencil in a hole and use it to get the grip of a screwdriver.

10. Fill a hole. Use a pencil to fill a hole in a wall. The pencil will act as a wedge.



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## Hand-Holders for Homeowners

Save money and headaches by hiring a renovation coach to manage your next project

JUST ABOUT ANYONE who's ever renovated a house will tell you that the undertaking was among the most stressful in their lives. Fortunately for the thousands of Americans starting a project that year, there's a new breed of therapist who can help navigate the rocky terrain. One such renovation consultant we'd heartily recommend is Bruce Irving, former executive producer of *The Old Man*.

"The thing about home renovation is that very few people have been able to prepare for it," says Irving, who has spent his skills working on 35 whole-house projects in his 17 years with the show. "They get wound up and nervous, losing this potential money pit, and it doesn't have to be that way." Irving and like professionals cover it all,



LOFF Homeowners Eric Luster (left) and Sybilie Smith with Bruce Irving in front of his couple's 1950 Queen Anne. ABOVE: Clients and coach discuss the renovation of another one of Luster's clients

giving ballpark estimates, assessing contractors, doling out product advice, and steering through permit hell.

Jesse Minetti, president of Renovation Coach in Atlanta, describes himself as a liaison between homeowners and building professionals, helping with expectations and managing their clients' expectations. "They're paying a reality check up front before they ever deal with the contractor."

Renovation consultants began by asking clients their goals. For Nancy Koehn, who hired Irving to help refinish her master bathroom renovation and a second-story addition to her 2,000-square-foot ranch in suburban Boston, that meant discussing windows, doors, and a construction timetable. "I wasn't lying on any couch and he wasn't asking about my past, but it was therapy," says Koehn. After the session, she suspended negotiations with her contractor and hired an architect to draw up plans. "He helped me decide to slow the whole process down."

You can also seek a consultant's advice before you shake down the cash for a first-upper. "They'll ask me for a second opinion on a house that they're starting to fall in love with but they're not fully qualified to assess with a professional eye," says Irving, who offers his advice and opinion. "I'm not carrying anyone's agenda but the homeowner's," he says.

Unlike an architect or contractor, who typically get paid a set rate to oversee a project from start to finish, a consultant's expertise can be hired for as much time as you like. Just don't expect a bargain. Eric Zagari, a Boston-based consultant and producer of *Renovation*, charges \$95 an hour, and his Irving, at \$300, ends a different fee schedule if you hire him for a longer job. But that \$300 could save you much more in the long run. After sitting with a client for an hour, he helped trim her material costs by suggesting a single exterior finisher that was more appropriate for a modern addition to her old house. "That saved a hundred grand off her bill," he says. —JESSIE MINETTI

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**FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

**MADISON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
MADISON, INDIANA**

So what's the real Potokopoti? Cincinnati, Chicago, and this month's featured city of Madison, Indiana, have a little class in the title. Indeed, back in the 1800s, each was renowned for its pork-packing prowess. But one thing is for sure, Madison was the last stop for millions of sales on their way to hoggle heaven.

But let's forget all that ugliness. Nowadays this Ohio River town lures visitors with its inspired scenery as well as its 1,600-plus historic houses and buildings. Its wealth of Federal, Art Deco, and Greek Revival houses will leave architectural junkies salivating, especially when they see the J.F.D. Lanier mansion completed in 1844, the National Historic Landmark, which is open to the public, has a cupola resembling The Tower of the Winds monument in Athens, Greece.

Aside from pork packing, Madison was built on the success of its ornate factories, where many of the ornate factories in New Orleans' French Quarter were forged. And it's home to the Beechwood-Gladstone-Factory Museum, the only remaining 19th-century millhouse that once churned out the wooden frames that better vehicles were attached around.

Totally the town is known for its three award-winning wheats offering daily tastings, as well as its famous 19th-century The 31 Steps Tour of Homes runs from September 13th through the 18th, and a Christmas celebration featuring a candlelight tour of Madison's most stately homes starts up just after Thanksgiving. If you'd like yourself to vacation with Madison that you want to stay longer, the average price of home is \$122,000. —JENNIFER MCGILL



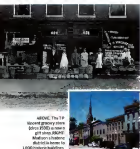
## Saws All

A new circular saw slices steel, aluminum, PVC, and wood, all with the same blade

THE ROCK STEELMAN: THE SPARK of a wood-cutting circular-saw blade meeting a steel rod is a noisy little surprise. So much so that the engineers at Evolution Power Tools developed a new saw called the Rage that'll cut smoothly, quietly, and cleanly through the lumber and the nails. You won't even know you're metal until you see the cross section spangled with shanks.

The Rage only works with its own 7 1/4-inch carbide-tipped blade. Other saws accept different blades for different materials, but this one will cut just about anything, and its anti-kickback tooth arrangement—previously seen only on chain saws—will keep you safe while you do it. A slower blade speed (5,000 revolutions per minute versus 5,800 for most circular saws) means the Rage won't overheat when sawing through metal.

A limitation of this one-blade saw is that it won't cut through concrete, but it's ideal for slicing aluminum siding, as well as copper and PVC piping. And go ahead and rip reclaimed lumber to your heart's content without the fear of the Bluewax. The Rage is \$130 at [evolutionpower.com](http://evolutionpower.com). —NORM SAWYER



ABOVE: The 31-Step historic grocery store, 1850s-1950s, is now a gift shop. RIGHT: Madison's historic district is home to 1,600 historic buildings.

**{ ORIGIN: ARBOR }**

**Q** **DIYER:** To test the steel prototype, Gillison's team at the pipe-manufacturing company where he worked challenged him to apply enough pressure to either sever a 1/2-inch copper tube or break the wrench. The wrench didn't break, but the pipe did.



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around the **HOUSE**

## Mom and Dad are Moving In

Five home improvements that'll make life easier for them, and for you

FACE IT: YOUR PARENTS WILL BE SPENDING their twilight years at your house, rather than Ready, Steady, Pass. That's because the number of senior citizens—many of whom will rely on family members for their care—is expected to rise from 35 million in 2010 to over 71 million in 2030, according to a recent study by the Rosalynn Carter Institute and the University of Florida. But thanks to high-end finishes, better design, and a little creative planning, improving your residence for aging parents and living doesn't have to mean sacrificing style.



The Old House asked a panel of construction and real estate experts to recommend upgrades to some commonplace improvements projects that will ease the transition for the next family. And depending on where you live—think across the country: Palm Springs—you may be able to recoup most of the costs when it comes time to sell the house. —JILL KRAMER

✦ **REMODEL BATH** Instead of a tub, opt for a whirl-tub walk-in shower with a height-adjustable showerhead, and choose grab bars, funded anchors, not institutional wheel. Add a toilet toilet

that complies with Americans with Disabilities Act specifications, a new vanity, and stone flooring for a high-end makeover. This will put you back about \$26,000, but about 90 percent of the cost will return to you should you sell.

✦ **ADD ACCESS** A wheelchair ramp is an expense at the moment, but built in conjunction with a new back deck is one work as a design element. Take it from architect and certified aging-in-place specialist Doug Walzer, whose wood-composite ramp sits on the ground level and coils as way up and around the structure like a grand, sweeping staircase. A typical deck costs about \$12,000 to build, but you'll get back about 90 percent of that investment if you sell.

✦ **BUILD AN ADDITION** "On average, a master-suite addition is a good, solid investment," says Stephanie Singer at the National Association of Realtors. A first-floor bedroom that costs \$73,000, for instance, will recoup about 88 percent of its cost. Bedrooms must be 36 inches or wider to be wheelchair accessible.

✦ **RENOVATE THE KITCHEN** Install drop pull-out drawers for pots and pans, pop-up placemats for heavy tabletop appliances, and cabinets under the counter rather than shelves so nothing's out of reach. The two pulls instead of hard-to-grasp knobs, and add extra task lighting. A high-end job, including new appliances and stone counters, can cost \$40,000, but you'll get style to spare and about an 83 percent return.

✦ **PUT IN AN ELEVATOR** Doug Walzer encourages families with multigenerational homes to install an elevator. Not only is it an upgrade for the elderly, it's bound to provide a sign of relief for anyone with a leg injury, use of children, or even a vacation desire to lug. Plus it's a handy fix to add in.

Photo courtesy of and photo as featured in design provided by The National Association of Realtors.

Pick your  
color carefully.  
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## Same Space, New Specs

» Taking down a wall and adding color opened up a cramped kitchen and gave it a vibrant new look

BY BILL GONNORS  
 PHOTOGRAPHS BY BREDD SEDAL

MOST HOMEOWNERS START a renovation with plans on paper. California kitchen designer Dana Jones and her contractor husband, Rick Jenkins, started theirs with a misproving view. When the pair bought their 1950s ranch in Long Beach, they knew the kitchen would have to go. "It had no water spout, old cabinets, inefficient appliances, and an air problem," says Dana. "We immediately tore down the wall between the kitchen and living area since we wanted an open plan."

Still, the kitchen design posed pretty strict no-pro-grade appliances, no glass surfaces, no carved-wood details. "I was done with all that in my lifetime," says Dana. "My tastes are more streamlined, which suits the simplicity of the house." She chose concrete floors, engineered stone counters, and contemporary bamboo basin cabinets that mix with traditional fluted-panel pantry doors and V-groove wallboards for something of a modern-farmhouse look. Black-oak appliances play off other bright accent colors used throughout the house.

Hard to watch all the work, from gutting the room to the studs to running the electrical to mowing the lawn, which helped them stay within their \$40,000 budget. Says Dana of the four-month kitchen redo, "We needed to change everything about the space functionally and aesthetically—and we did."



**BEFORE:** The wall between the kitchen and living area was closed off, leaving a dark and cramped space. **AFTER:** The green pantry wall (far right) covers the spot where a back door stood. The concrete surface, exposed rafters and wall were removed, was cleaned and colored with an acid-based stain. Toeblinks were built 2 inches higher than normal to allow for future installation of wood or tile.

# TOP FROM KITCHEN DESIGNER DANA JONES

Plus now for future changes. "We know we'll be able to change the look of our kitchen anytime just by painting the green cabinets a different color and leaving the natural bamboo cabinets and countertops alone."

Choose a countertop that suits your lifestyle. "We considered marble, granite, and other natural stones, but chose an engineered stone because it handles better, is easier to clean, and is as strong as it's not. It's a win-win."

Every window counts. "To get as much natural light as possible in the small space, we kept the two existing windows, added two skylights, and put a small window above the entry wall where a door once stood."



**BEFORE** The old 110 sq ft kitchen had little counter space and a doorway intruding the layout. **AFTER** Removing the wall shared with the living room and adding up the back door made room for a handy U-shaped design with counters, cabinetry and appliances on all three walls. A skylight even added lighting.



## The Plan

>> Open up the kitchen and maximize efficiency without expanding the room's footprint.

### What They Did

- 1) TORE DOWN A WALL—AND MORE.** The homeowners demolished the wall dividing the kitchen from the living room to create an open-plan space without enlarging the footprint. Later they took the rest of the room down to the studs.
- 2) CLOSED UP A BACK DOOR FOR A U-SHAPED LAYOUT.** A door leading to the backyard was removed and all three remaining walls fitted out with cabinets and appliances. The cooktop sits under one of the two existing windows, which offers a glimpse new but stays shut when the burners are lit (it doesn't vent to the outdoors). Food storage is contained in floor-to-ceiling pantry cabinets that also house the fridge. A craft nook was added up high where the door had been.
- 3) ADDED A CENTER ISLAND.** The 2½-by-4½-foot island offers seating for two, plus shelves and pull-out bins on the sink side.
- 4) MADE ROOM FOR BROOMS.** A 25-inch-wide broom closet next to the refrigerator kept brooms from sight.



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"The most remarkable thing about the kitchen is the color—the apple-green cabinets give the room personality and tie it to the rest of the house."  
—GAIL JENSEL, DESIGNER AND HOMESHAPER

## The Details

» A dose of color and rich, natural materials bring smart storage ideas to life.

**1. THE CUSTOM SPIRIT CABINET** is designed like a bathroom medicine chest, with a chalkboard where the mirror would be.

**2. THE PAUL APPROXIMATE SINK** was made by tying the front of a stock 30-inch single-bowl stainless steel kitchen sink with the same Gensler-style engine-turned lines used for the round lamp and backsplash.

**3. THE BARBED TELEPHONE CABINET** around the living room corner reduces the clutter of a Pylebox base cabinet—much better for storing hefty phone books and creating a dedicated message center. The wall-to-wall display off the kitchen's apple-green cabinets.

**4. SMALL-APPLIANCE STORAGE** is provided by pretty cabinets that run right down to the leg of the counter top, keeping clutter to a minimum.

**5. THE MICROWAVE AND WALL OVEN** are housed in a cabinet topped by an LCD TV. The TV is mounted on an articulating bracket for viewing from anywhere in the room.

For more open-plan kitchen ideas, visit [www.vesicare.com/kitchen](http://www.vesicare.com/kitchen).

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BATH DESIGN



The homeowners' desire really is to make their natural cherry and topped with the same beige marble that lines the walls and floors. Husband and wife have dedicated storage in multiple cabinets on either side of the mirror and in the tub surround. The tub surround was painted white to ensure the dark cabinetry wouldn't overwhelm the room.

## Perfect Pairing

» This bright and airy master bath is a just-right blend of masculine and feminine

*IN HOME DESIGN AS IN LIFE, the more things change, the more they stay the same.*

The freemans had just gone up on this once-and-a-shingle house designed by architect Jay Haverson when clients fell in love with his vision and bought the place—then started remodeling the interior to their liking. Not only were they able to select their own finishes, when they saw the plan for two separate baths linking the master bedroom—a growing need for master convenience—they decided they'd prefer one shared master bath and a bedroom wing seen later.

So "his" bath became "clean," and "her" became the steamy room at the entry to the master suite. In keeping with the overall aesthetic of the house, the bathroom combines classic architectural details such as a walled core ceiling, wainscoted walls, and arched moldings with luxurious materials like Brazilian cherry and Crema Marfil marble. To bring some color and a sense of intimacy to the room, the couple chose sky-blue and beige paneled wallpaper to cover the top half of the walls.

For the homeowners, newlyweds expecting their first child, the room encapsulates everything they love about the house. Says the wife, "It's traditional and a bit formal, but not too much so."

BY JILL GONCHES  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY MICHAEL LUFFINO



**FOR LEFT** The wall-to-wall marble—an architectural motif found elsewhere in the house—is painted blue to echo the wallpaper enclosing this entry.

**NEAR LEFT** A pattern of 1 1/2 inch white marble tile surrounding 32-inch large marble tiles to test this mix with a border of 1/4 inch squares. "The pattern helps to separate the entry visually and creates an interesting focal point," says architect Jay Silverstein.



**ABOVE** An initial remodeling effort—use of stone at its corner—saved the cone ceiling and utilizes two different treatments: engineered wood for the taller room; translucent glass for the shower. The polished nickel-brass warmer supports the tub in another lower-level detail.

**RIGHT** The electric-lined shower enclosure, the tile without that wrap. But even it is equipped with a built-in bench and multiple showerheads and body sprays.



## The Plan

» Create a well-appointed bath for him and for her with plenty of natural light and spa-like luxuries

### What They Did

- 1 | ADDED A SECOND SINK.** "Her" proposed space became a shared master bath with the addition of a second sink at one end of the rectangular 60-by-32 foot room. The shared tub at the center anchors the space, with side-by-side compartments at the other end for the shower and toilet.
- 2 | KEPT IT LIGHT.** These windows over the tub, plus one in the toilet room, bring plenty of natural light into the room. Sky-blue paint and the visual cone ceilings enhance the very effect.
- 3 | LOADED UP ON AMENITIES.** Radiant-floor heating, a multipoint steam shower, a jetted spa tub, a towel warmer and three speakers built into the walls create a relaxing, spa-like environment.

More ideas for making the most of a shared bath: [danruss.com/bathbuds](http://danruss.com/bathbuds)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE SPECIFICATIONS PAGE 42

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LUXURIES



## Swingers

Swap in these hinges to give old or modern cabinets a brand-new look.

BY ANDREW WOODS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN KAYSON

MODERN COUNTRY HOMES are made to be swappable. There are no fixed hinges.

The antiques of their contemporary "hobbies" counterparts, architectural hinges are ornate, some custom, with various shapes, ornate hand-carved designs, and fine finishes.

In the woods they came from, thousands of years ago, hinges were chopsworn by blacksmiths, who hammered and forged the hardware for cupboards, dressers, even kitchens. Modern reproduction hinges, those hinges, are materials ranging from traditional iron to 14-karat gold.

According to kitchen cabinet, around on power down, or turning the lid of an old-fashioned black chest, decorative hinges add a stamp of beauty and nobility to the look that holds past and present together.

### 1. CONCEPT

This polished brass four-hole hinge is designed for the long doors of a wardrobe. The projecting "flange" allows the hinge to grip fully and be fast against the wall. \$70.50, [rustoleum.com](http://rustoleum.com)

### 2. FINISHES

Eighteenth-century blacksmiths often took their time to create intricate, hand-forged hinges. Rust-Oleum's hand-forged hinges, made from solid steel, are available in a variety of finishes, including a black finish. \$10.50, [rustoleum.com](http://rustoleum.com)

### 3. ANTIQUE

The design for this iron hinge dates back to 18th-century England, where it was used on furniture and cabinets. \$10.50, [rustoleum.com](http://rustoleum.com)



**4 | GLOBE**

Although the globe-shaped knob design has been around for more than 200 years, the globe-shaped knob and polished metal finish make it a home to contemporary settings. 3 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$225 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**5 | ROTT**

This elegant yet modern of the most modern types of hinges—the two-levered barrel rivet—features a polished metal finish and a polished metal 4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$145 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**6 | PARLIAMENT**

The square shape of this ball-bearing pivot hinge is ideal for a door or window that hinges outwardly degrees and must close a perimeter, such as decorative window. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$275 for a pair | [pavilion.com](http://pavilion.com)

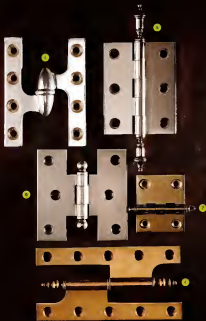
**7 | CLOCK CASE**

This polished brass hinge, with its oval ends and ornate surface, makes the case a clock case choice. The design allows for a ball-bearing pivot—so that partially open the surrounding metal frame. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$20 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**8 | LEFT-OFF**

This gold-plated French hinge is a unique, but available, the design design on between glass panels. The design of the two-levered hinge the door is to keep the glass in place, removing the risk of shattering. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$100 for a pair | [pavilion.com](http://pavilion.com)

For information on surface-mounting hinges, visit [www.vintage.com](http://www.vintage.com)



With surface-mounted hinges, the hardware's on display, too, so choose screws that are a close match with the material and finish.

**9 | BRASS**

This solid brass knob hinge is ideal for use on wood, metal, or stone. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$22 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**10 | VICTORIAN**

A cast iron Victorian hinge from 1892 has the security of its design, but its intricate carved patterns are ideal. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$50 per pair | [pavilion.com](http://pavilion.com)

**11 | AMERICAN**

This cast brass hinge with its ornate design was inspired by the work of American designer Charles Francis Mott. It would look right at home on a Victorian estate. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$25 for a pair | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**12 | VICTORIAN**

This cast brass hinge, made of brass, is ideal for use in metal or wood. It is made in the United States. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$25 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)

**13 | VICTORIAN**

This cast brass hinge, made of brass, is ideal for use in metal or wood. It is made in the United States. 2 1/4 in. by 2 1/4 in. | \$25 | [vintage.com](http://vintage.com)





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**It's a caulk.**



**It's an adhesive.**

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**LANDSCAPING**

## A Fine Foundation

» The plantings closest to your home should play up its assets and soften its hard edges. Here's how

by <http://www.hortonsjournal.com/author/2/DAVID>

A cluster of plants—cascading clematis, yellow daylilies with red centers, and blue hydrangeas—represents one of the best ways to make an effective foundation planting for this age-old Colonial Revival. One-shaped plants add a formal touch of the early 20th century, but will eventually take the house's form.

the best of both. Foundation plants should enhance your home, make it more welcoming, and tie it to the surrounding landscape. Unfortunately, those house-hugging plantings frequently consist of stiff evergreens that do little for the house they adorn. Even worse, they're often dressed up as something closer to green leaves of broad than to anything formal in nature. Here are some ways to rethink that narrow row of clipped evergreens.

**1. WORK WITH THE ARCHITECTURE AND OVERALL STYLE OF YOUR HOUSE.** Is your home characterized by formal symmetry, with a central door and equal numbers of windows lined up on either side—such as on Georgian, Federalist, or even Colonial Revival? If so, you may want to consider designs that have formal elements, with abundant shrubs screening the entry and mirror-image plantings on each side of it. On the other hand, informal,

cottage-style homes and low-slung ranches look best with more casual, asymmetrical plant schemes.

In both cases, avoid overusing elements that distract from the entry or entrance and the house as a whole, such as tall plantings that block views of your home, or a tree bed in the middle of an open lawn. The area around the entrance is where guests experience your landscape close up, so make this area welcoming with an interesting contrast of plant forms, flow, color, and foliage colors and textures. Whenever on the facade, a stretch of bare wall between windows is often an invitation for a large shrub, a small tree, or even a vine-covered trellis. Around windows, be sure not to cut off light and air with plants that will grow too high.

Tall plantings placed in the corners of the house help define its edges and tie it into the landscape. They can also give the illusion of extending a small house, making it appear larger. Medium-size flowering trees like dogwood,

Christopher J. Delton  
is a landscape  
architect in  
New York.



**AFORWELLED** gardeners: Low-maintenance plants provide a low-maintenance display. **TOP LEFT:** An outdoor garden bed with a low-growing perennial that won't block windows as they grow. **TOP RIGHT:** Lush beds of regional hydrangeas and shrubs bring home back a covered entry.

Canadian redwood, euonymus, rose-of-Sharon, and crepe myrtle all have a home that fits into a garden, cottage-style house. More sturdy traditional houses can be planted at night and with upright English oaks, junipers, or groups of Leyland cypresses to add a colorful effect.

Of course, it's worth pointing out that houses that don't have most foundations to disguise or have handsome stone work to be showcased may not need more than extensive and colorful plantings. A bed of grasses or a row of match may be all that is necessary to tie the two areas together—and make maintenance and mowing easier.

**2 GO FOR FOUR SEASONS OF INTEREST** There goes everything every other house in your neighborhood may be indestructible, but they're not much to look at. The right evergreens (see page 46 for suggestions) give a foundation planting year-round structure, but incorporating deciduous shrubs and perennials provides ornamental value all year long. Choose plants with an eye to staggered bloom times from early spring to late summer, colorful fall foliage, and from to winter.

In addition to being so many, most foundation plantings are also too narrow, with a single row of shrubs that doesn't extend far enough out into the yard. You may be able to fix that simply by reimagining the bed and adding more plants to front. Layer them back to those from culture to others, making sure some of the new ones towers over the established back row.

**3 CHOOSE PLANTS THAT ARE THE RIGHT SIZE AND SCALE** Not taking into account plants' size at maturity is probably the number-one mistake homeowners make. We've all seen windows obscured by overgrown evergreens that no longer looked just fine when they were planted. Choosing shrubs of the right size will also help keep pruning to a minimum. Look for dwarf varieties that mature at 2 to 4 feet tall for under windows and other tight spaces.

Above all, plan before you plant. A good place to start is by enlarging a photo of your home and tracing the outline of a on paper. Add a few key elements you want to keep, such as mature trees. Then start experimenting, clashing or placing plants (at their full grown size and shape) you're casual critter. This process will help to choreographing the layout, determining exactly how much you can incorporate, and establishing a thoughtful and economical approach to planting in foundation plantings that truly enhance your home.

## Design Tips

**GO FOR A MIX** of evergreen and deciduous plants that provide year-round interest with staggered bloom times in spring and summer fall foliage color and berries or interesting forms in winter. **DO NOT PLANT TOO MUCH**—or too big! Choose shrubs and perennials that won't overwhelm the house or the space at maturity. Use low-growing plants covering your windows. **ADD PERENNIALS** the first couple of years to fill out gaps while new plants are getting established. **DO NOT PLANT ONE OF EVERYTHING**. Vary your design by repeating plants several times, drawing the eye across the whole bed.

**GET A JUMP ON SPRING FLOWERS** with blooming bulbs. Daffodils are a great choice for the visible early color for a second show (and foliage spent foliage) by planting English daffodils in front of them.

**0**  
**READ YOUR SOIL**  
Landscape plants have different soil preferences. *See page 42*

PHOTO: © SHAWN TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES



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## Great (Often Overlooked) Foundation Plants



ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Decorative will still needed everywhere  
to keep attractiveness prominent

**What's Hot:** *Italy (aka Misericordia)* Growing one year for age and red berries in full sun 7 to 10 feet tall. Responds well to heavy pruning in showing little signs of peeling to form a formal entry. Partial to full shade. Hardiness: Z7 F.

**Johnny (aka John) Deo** and his crew with the groovy, dark groundhog the covered archway between the Grove Street to 22nd St. Covered tunnel is 600 feet tall. Sunlight filters through the 200

**Mimosa borealis** (Silene microphylla)  
**Mimosa** (Fairy) growing 11m English  
hills (great to quickly catch 'barns'  
records of ridge top). Compact and low  
growing, reaching 2 feet tall. Petal and  
corolla pale blue to white.

**Maurandia lateralis** (Malvaceae: Malvales)  
Leathery dark green succulent leaves and large  
clusters of broad-shaped/pink, white or  
red flowers mid-to-late spring. A show grower!  
that can reach 20 feet tall. Partial shade  
needed and drought-tolerant. 1987-1991, 1996

#### ADDITIONAL PLANTING INFORMATION

It says overstocked vines produce reliable spring color, adding later-flowering shrubs will extend the show.

**Betty Ford** (www.philly-bettyford.com) and **Knock Out** (www.philly-knockout.com) compiled personalized men's and women's summer apparel and accessories that are eligible to be awarded to lucky shoppers.

**Endless Summer Hydrangea**  
(*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Endless Summer') This magenta-white flower panicle shrub is new and still used alternately in nurseries on

**Sunscreened (Native seedling) Thudera**  
like tuberoses without shaped greenhouses  
and fully, valleys of white flowers in winter

aka *viridula*. Eastern Composites vary up a little. Spurred turnstones grow up to that, grow 3 to 4 feet tall and are sparsely or abundantly branched. Ruby Spurn grows up to 4 feet tall, with deep pink flowers. Both have bracts that are



**ABSTRACT**

### ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

**Industries** **Key Indicators** (Bureau of Economic Analysis) **Quarterly** seasonally adjusted annual  
Leading growth index (annualized) with large clusters  
of very low values—different from economic  
to early fall (Frost & Snow bands can be left)

Stella de Oro: *Hydrangea* (Hydrangeaceae)  
Stella de Oro: *Hydrangea* (Hydrangeaceae)

Summer (compact) long stem flowers to  
deep magenta-yellow (blooms all  
summer) (compact ally like the Black-eyed  
violet. Grows to 2' tall) Full sun to  
partial shade Hardy to -30° F

**PROBING** The hole of history by  
down with long slender blue spurs.  
Probing it reveals hole to innermost soul  
(much more reliable) Set Wells Guard  
green.74 is a full ball Walker's Last is a  
overlaid 104 answered thirty years. It  
became a hole answered all your mind.

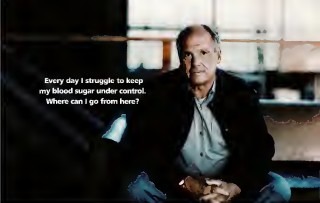
**Cuscutoma** (*Eichhamsia* spp.) This hardy perennial produces bouquet of long, trailing pink, purple, or white flowers or long, stiff stems in mid to late summer.

'Karl Foerster' grass (*Calamagrostis*) is acid-loving. 'Karl Foerster' is my favorite ornamental grass for upright formality. Bunches arching, glaucous dark green foliage

Chinese rose fountaingrass  
(*Pharbitis nil*)

pink to blue with plumbeous soft  
pink lower lobes from July through  
September when bright green leaves  
turn yellow and they sometimes turn  
full sun - hardy to 27°

**Dragon's Tongue** (*Claytonia virginica*)  
 Dragon's Tongue is a small, low-growing plant with  
 small, round, green leaves and small, white flowers.  
 It is native to the eastern United States and is  
 found in wet, shaded areas. It is a good choice for  
 a garden in the shade.



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risk for low blood sugar. Ask your doctor whether you need  
to lower the dose of any other diabetes medicine. Avandia  
may increase your risk of pregnancy. Talk to your doctor before  
taking Avandia if you could become pregnant or if you are  
pregnant. If you are nursing, you should not take Avandia.  
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doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0142802.g002



## Porch Rail Revival

» How to use salvaged balustrades to spruce up the exterior of an old house or add a hint of history to the interior of a newer one

BY AMY D. MUGGERIDGE



THE ITALIAN HARRY, the beguiling French, the glistening and the Spanish, they slip their tongues in conversation. But here in the United States we have porches, piazzas and stoops. And aside from the exuberant roof and fountains of the southwestern American porch defined by its railing—a wood one, to be exact.

Originally carved by hand, early railings were built more for safety than decoration, less for the ornate porch of an 1830s Greek Revival, for example, the varnished plumbike balustrades practically needed brass line between for greater uniformed supports.

By the 1870s, the American Industrial Revolution brought mass production of machine-carved porch parts in more complex designs. Some powered saws were made to rip for workmen to piece-fit wood panels with curved, quartered and sharp-angled decorative patterns. Among the most concentrated were the railings of Queen Anne. Common were Chippendale lattice patterns reflecting an American fascination with things British, as well as delicate spindlework inspired by the designs of Charles Eastlake, an influential English furniture maker.

In this late Victorian period, even simple railings and new exterior fence lines were updated with entire porch



**TIP** Will it do with single balusters? Use turned ones as spacers by following all corners in three legs with a square but use your end square and gluing the balusters in square wooden boxes.

PHOTOS: TOP BY GUY LAWRENCE; BOTTOM BY GUY LAWRENCE



padding slid through oval-shaped carvings. The 1962 Universal Design book shows 25 stock baluster profiles between 14 and 32 cents a piece, depending on size, detail, and whether it was new or turned on a lathe.

Mail catalogs remained the main source for wooden porch parts through the 1920s, but the bulk of more fancy railings of this popular Prairie and Craftsman-style houses came from catalogs in choice form. Those that were available tended to be long and heavy, heavy in order to resist up to the hump to avoid wood on masonry posts they were anchored between.

It wasn't until suburban sprawl, the shift from lawn to traffic-dragged roads, and a preponderance of cheap, post-World War II houses that wood railings and the porches they graced became obsolete. "Who wanted to sit on a porch and watch cars whiz past?" asked Michael Dolan in his book *The American Porch*. A link with the back of a ranch-style house was the answer then, as aluminum is now.

That said, there are still old leafy streets where neighbors chat as they walk their dogs or watch each other's kids playing in the yard. Then, the porch is very much alive, though maybe a bit the worse for wear. For owners of such houses, unadorned salvaged railings are full of period replacement for missing or faded railings. Finding a match for a single disconnected baluster is next to impossible (that's why you'll have to take

an intact example to a mill shop and have it milled). But you will find long listing sections with which to rebuild a porch or construct a new one. Scott Ruggs, co-owner of Guided Railways in Minneapolis, Minnesota, sells 7-foot sections starting at \$140. Just beware that modern building codes may require more tightly spaced balusters or higher handrails for safety.

When considering looks, keep in mind that an balustrade-style railing, for example, with tiny vase-shaped balusters will appear out of place under any of a plain Jane stile level or a simple Colonial Revival. For owners of such houses, Mike Whitnack, co-owner of Back Dog Salvage in Kasaan, Oregon, suggests using the old wood work inside, rather than outside, the house.

Whitnack has used his Victorian era balustrade, which sells for less than \$10, as the body of a pedestal fence to make one, at night, and repurposed chunky turned balusters as coffee table legs. You might even cut a cube with a lathe to use as a corner door opening, and add hinges and a latch to make a dog gate, suggests Scott Ruggs. The salvaged dealer has also turned tapered iron rail into a Gothic-style gabled headboard. He did it by tying the middle vertically through the middle and flipping one side of the balusters down to link to the two legs formed a V shape. He then joined the legs at their disposal tips with a metal angle bracket.

Even as many Americans slip their sneakers on the back deck rather than the front porch, one thing's for sure: The design versatility of old wood railings means that porches, or at least the parts that enclose them, will never entirely be things of the past. ■



**FELT LEFT:** The classical design of this railing with its turned balusters appeals to appropriate for various Victorian-era house styles. **LEFT:** The cross bracing on this railing is characteristic of workhorses on Stick-style houses. **RIGHT:** Felt uses Queen Anne-style balusters.



**BIRD** **WEEK:** Fall. Look for new porch railings in November. p. 16

## Building a Baluster Pedestal

Using scraps of weather beaver lacquered and balusters, Back Dog Salvage's Mike Whitnack built this little pedestal—which makes a great plant stand or small table base—with materials you can find at most salvage yards for less than \$20. Take four matching balusters and fasten at top and bottom along the sides of square and blocks to create a square box. Center the bottom of the baluster box on a wider square base and add it to place. For added support, attach wooden strips to the outside faces of the balusters. Next, make a decorative, tapered capital for the top by gluing together four square boards, one slightly smaller than the other (80% the width based on top), create the baluster box with the capital. Fasten the pedestal by wrapping the top edges of the balusters with 1/4-inch wooden strips nailed just beneath the capital.



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GREEN HOUSE



## Air Aid

» The stuff you breathe inside your home might be as filthy as an L.A. smog storm. Here's what you can do about it.

BY KATHY PANDOLFI PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLA LORICE

LIKE A CONSTRUCTION site, Offenberg's shows up as people's houses to examine the not-so-beige elements that lurk within. But rather than green, gray, shabby, his targets are invisible contaminants, like dust mites, mold spores, or volatile organic compounds, that homeowners may struggle to locate, let alone removing them.

"People come to me with all sorts of concerns," says Offenberg, president of San Francisco-based Indoor Environmental Regeneration, an air-quality consulting firm. "They have small kids with allergies, or they are having symptoms themselves." For \$4,900, he conducts a complete air-quality checkup. If the complaint is a respiratory ailment, he checks for mold in bathrooms, kitchens, and air-handling systems. If nothing turns up, he'll explore wide wall cavities and take air samples for laboratory analysis. Offenberg's most chemically sensitive clients sometimes call complaining of a persistent leak he terms "leaky fog." Indoor fog can be made of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), chemical compounds that can be emitted by wall-to-wall carpet, linoleum, plywood, and other construction materials.

"It's kind of like detective work," he says. And three days, Offenberg is busier than Mike Hammer shriveling homicide. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the air inside our homes and offices is up to five times more polluted than even the cleanest outdoor air. In fact, as you sit reading this article in the coziness of your easy chair, you are likely sucking a mixture of bacteria, viruses, and allergens into your precious pink lungs. Arthur in his library, who inhale 30 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults, has been directly linked to the presence of dust mites, mold, and pet dander. More formidable airborne enemies include radon, an invisible gas produced by uranium in the soil under your house; secondhand smoke; and poisonous gases like carbon monoxide, which can be caused from poorly maintained gas stoves, furnaces, or fireplaces, and can cause headaches, chest pain, even death.



**PASADENA HERITAGE'S** Craftsman Weekend will include a demonstration by Offenberg, a visit with the organic compounds, which can be given off by paints and finishes, and avoid spores from your air-tighty clean shower curtain.

## THE WHITE GLOVE TEST

For wait a second, you say. We've been studying this stuff for years. Why are we getting to such all of a sudden? Much of it can be attributed to modern construction methods. In the name of energy efficiency, newer houses are extremely airtight, which cuts down on heating costs but also prevents a healthy exchange between inside and outside air. Add to that the fact that in this age of central air conditioning, hardly anyone cracks open a window a day.



Cleaning, ventilating—even buying some plants—are easy ways you can improve indoor air quality.

Fortunately, there are things you can do to improve the quality of your indoor air, and they don't all require a visit from a Hazmat-suited pro. Start by keeping your house clean. Regular vacuuming and dusting gets rid of dust mites, pet dander, and tracked-in allergens. A vacuum with a HEPA filter traps smaller particles that other vacuums release back into the air. Get a slipcover for your sofa, wash it frequently, and don't let the dog up there, so no one howls and those big brown eyes look in the bathroom, check the walls, shower curtains, and under the sink for mold and mildew, and wash towels and bath mats at least once a week. Keep your kitchen fan on, too—especially under-sink cabinets and the refrigerator drip tray—another key source of cleaning products are well sealed, because they can leak VOCs.

When not properly maintained, HVAC systems can become breeding grounds for mold. "In most buildings and homes, the air filters you aren't kept up," says Bill Eno, a senior scientist at Jyogen Inc., an indoor-air-quality diagnostic and air-quality consulting company in

Clearwater, Florida. "People don't realize how important it is to keep them clean." Eno recommends changing filters and cleaning coils regularly.

To combat carbon monoxide, stuff out \$30 for a detector. If it reads out above 10 parts per million, get on the horn to your safety company, or your furnace or gas stove might be damaged or working improperly. You can also pick up a carbon monoxide kit at your local hardware store for a bare \$35. If the gas is present, you might need to seal up cracks in your foundation to stop it from seeping through.

## WHOLE-HOUSE AND PORTABLE FILTRATION

No matter how good a housekeeper you are, it's impossible to eliminate all airborne contaminants. But you can control them with proper ventilation. Make sure the vents fans in your kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room are working properly, if you don't have any, think about installing them. You can also increase air exchange by putting in an attic fan to suck stale air out and pull fresh outside air in, or installing in an energy recovery ventilator (ERV), a device that uses ducts to distribute fresh air throughout the house.

Whole-house or portable air filters from companies such as Trane, Aprilaire, or Carrier are another good option. At the very least, replace the existing filter in your forced-air system with a more efficient pleated one. The best ones are not dramatically changed and can trap allergens like pet dander and pollen, which can penetrate conventional filters. Most electronic "media filters" are heavy ones containing thick thick blocks of fibrous material. These require professional installation, since electrical boxes in cars are not recommended. Portable air cleaners with HEPA filters are good for individual rooms. But according to Dittmer, all of this air-cleaning technology can only do so much to keep you breathing easy. "If you don't keep your house clean," he says, "even the best filters are pretty much useless." ■

## 7 Steps to Cleaner Air

**VENTILATE** > Install window exhaust fans vented to the outdoors in kitchen, bathroom, and laundry rooms. You can also ventilate your house with an attic fan or an energy recovery ventilator.

**FILTER** > Buy a portable air purifier with a HEPA filter or installed in or electrically charged filters in your forced-air furnace. Change fan filters at least once a month.

**PLANT** > Studies show that spider plants, philodendrons, peace lilies, and also rose can neutralize benzene, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides.

**VACUUM** > Dusting and vacuuming

reduce pollen, animal dander, and other allergy-causing agents. Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA) filter, which can trap the smallest of particles.

**CHANGE YOUR SHOWER CURTAIN** > A vinyl one treated to resist mold and odors is best.

**CHECK YOUR CHIMNEY** > Flues and chimneys should be inspected and cleaned regularly. Partially clogged chimneys can allow harmful combustion gases like carbon monoxide into your house.

**USE AREA RUGS** > In heavily trafficked areas, there are mats to roll up and clean.



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4x4	4x4	4x4	4x4
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## TOOLBOX



## Chisels

With a sharp set of these, you can shape wood to your will.

STANLEY SANTER, M.D., M.P.H., is an associate professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

**USCIB TELLS THE VERY MOST RECENT** no, you just have that standing. Many pop-ups just exist, either on Bebo, or Jive, or somewhere between your parents. Before you report one to the net police, you should, like I know many chicks do, just search "infiltrate" or any other words more along a spy project, like going on a big pop-up mission when having a date.

In the real world, what I call "street magic," happens in the hands of tattooed and farm-gate mothers. They push blades through the hardest of hard skin, stirring thousands of an inch off dirt and raising armies with dreams of right you know you when you call the two ages.

The last wilderness, The Old House master cat, Al. Nieces Arden and I, occasionally let the mouse in. In fact, the last time the TDW ever got together for a party (in 2001), I used mouse traps washing Nieces Arden and I to keep cockroaches at bay. He did, at least, wipe the Niece before dropping a back into his nest box. There again, that was his "weird" class, not to be confused with his working class; those mouse traps loomed he roared from a walk under, and kept on his back.

For the two of us, who don't make such distinctions, *Sevens* will show how to get your edge back on page 123. (Meanwhile, have a look at *Secrets* that make eye eye.

## EAST and WEST

These two styles of shoe are made of wood. As shown by these two takes on a traditional tool

[illegible]

stool (for [how-to](#)) with handy high-rise stool plainer). Tapering the low stool, a process once used to make round stools, creates the curve in this perching stool. Increase the leg spread and fold in side legs for that Newton counterpoise used atop the various washbasins—another classic “bowl” to reduce friction against the workplace. 34 inches long, 22 inches wide, \$300. [TheNewtonStool.com](#)



## BEVEL-EDGE SETS

The most commonly used chisels have straight, slender blades sloped on three sides to save weight and slip easily into tight corners. The handle material will give you a clue about a chisel's intended purpose: Wood joints of fine joinery and delicate handwork: plastic can tolerate some rough chopping and shrugs off hammer blows. Buying chisels in sets will provide you with a range of blade widths, from 1/4 to 1 inch.



### BUY IT FOR THE HANDLE

When a tool has to take some abuse, it's hard to beat a beveled chisel with an industrial-grade plastic handle like this tough, all-purpose for less. It won't split if you hit its steel end against a traditional metal one like Hammer when doing rough or finish carpentry. Shallow rubber cushions on the handle offer a comfortable grip for your Chisel when you're working by hand. \$25 for a set of 3. Stanley.com



### BUY IT FOR THE BLADE

These well-balanced and consistently sharp pocket chisels are fine for woodworking, are made with a special heat-treated steel that's hard enough to hold its edge without being so brittle that it chips easily. The hardened handles don't split in the middle, are less likely to split when struck, combined with a blade with a flourishing design into it, and they are easily refinished. \$300 for a set of five with another tool for \$400.00.



**STANLEY**  
Tools  
Screwdrivers  
Chisels  
Pry Bars  
Workshop  
p. 57

## SPECIALTY CHISELS

For those situations when a straight bevel-edge tool is uncomfortable or impossible to use.



**BITTY**  
With its stubby 2 1/2-inch blade, this palm chisel chisel is just the right size for putting a finger plate on the inside of a door with one hand. 9 1/2 inches long. \$45



**CHARMION WOOD**  
An angled handle gives your knuckles some room behind the blade. Push the work surface. Use it to pare protruding wood plugs on doors and furniture. 12 1/2 inches long. \$50



**BEVELED**  
Good to pull (one-edge chisel), left, the other right, they're usually furniture makers for fine-tuning corners beyond the reach of a rectangular chisel. The angled edge also won't tear out trim joints like a square chisel can. 12 1/2 inches long. \$50



**HORNDIE**  
With its thick handle and a sturdy straight point inside the work the chisel can withstand the heavy metal blades of a door handle or finish hammer chipping deep, rectangular recesses into tough painted hardwood. 12 1/2 inches long. \$45

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UPKEEP



FROM THE TOP TV JOB SITE

## Fall Inspection Guide

» 5 steps to giving your house a yearly checkup. From the pros at *This Old House*

BY MAX HLEKINER PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBBIE L. NAYE



TOMMIEHARRISATLASLIGHTens the way of the three-story house, but he doesn't need a. Daylight streams in through several open holes in the roof, and the rays of sunlight pierce the empty space like in an old-movie painting. "Looks like it's been looking for a while," says the *This Old House* general contractor, as he points out dark water stains on the sheathing. A rotted trunk leg dangles from a corner in all the seasons of an earlier fifty-year solution.

Back in 1916, when the family of Christine Flynn and her sister Liz Bagley bought the up-and-down two-family house now there, there was no home inspector to look over the property. Didn't need it, they were the last owners. But that was a long time ago, and over the years, the place—the makeover star of the new season of *TOH* television, which began on PBS next month—has mustered more than a few checkups and a lot of pervasive problems. The crew is getting ready for the season of construction by doing an informal version of what a professional inspector does when a property changes hands. But had someone been giving the house the kind of attention one expects from, many of its current problems could have been kept at bay.

Since inspections always mean to find something wrong, it stands to reason that any homeowner who uses that kind of thorough thinking as a model during a once-a-year maintenance review—preferably in the fall, before rough weather sets in, and with a clipboard in hand—will catch small problems before they blossom into major expenses. You don't need to hire a pro, though it may be warranted under certain circumstances (see "Getting Professional Help," page 65). But just knowing where and how to look will help you create a solid, no-nonsense thing report list, from which you can check items off one by one to keep your house in good health. "You won't be able to do everything a pro inspector does," says Tim, "but you'll say one step ahead of the wind and the sun."

Not just a construction job, this is a house inspection by a professional. The man in the blue shirt and jeans is looking for the signs of decay and damage that could lead to a major problem.



## HERE'S A FIVE-STEP PLAN OF ATTACK FOR LOOKING AT YOUR HOUSE WITH THE CAREFUL EYE OF A PRO.

### 1 JUDGE A DOOR BY ITS COYER

The logical place to start any telltale maintenance inspection and repair list is outside, where you can take in the big picture. For Tim Silva, that means doing something as simple as sweating and looking at the house. Conspicuous changes from year to year, like cracked or missing siding or a sagging roofline, such as a compromised foundation that's pulling the house down.

But you also need to look at the paint that coats the whole exterior—roof, eaves, siding. Take note of anything broken, cracked, curled, split, or cracked. But also pay attention to less obvious signs: stains on siding that could mean water isn't flowing through the gutters and downspouts, peeling paint or missing mortar in distressed spots, mold holes or droppings near eaves or on roofline. Be especially conscious of the presence of water, because that always means trouble.

Don't just look at the house; look around it, too. Trees hanging over a roofline just past a meter dance, they may not just shade your house, they may be causing roof damage. Or even bridge, or lean dangerously close to power lines. Overgrown foliage might be more than an eyesore if it reveals foundation and soil problems and con-

ditions including damage. Roger Clark, TCM landscape contractor, says, "You should be able to walk between the plants and bushes, even if it's a bare spot for maintenance." Also, he says the ground drops away from the house and sits at least 18 inches below the sill.

Next, check in with the driveway and driveway before cold weather and frozen ground opens them up and exacerbates the cracking. Check downspouts, pipes, and water with a little magic to see which parts are vulnerable to crumbling in the next big snow, and note any if roosting birds are hanging or flying.

### CONSIDER FOR A CLOSE LOOK

Once you've taken in the general scene of it all, you should consider a closer look at a house's exterior. Think about the places where water has been, or could be, coming into the house and reaching the structure. Contractors and inspectors will agree that water is the biggest enemy of a house.

The penultimate is a window, but doors and windows are obvious places to start, says Joe Corvino, the president of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) and the owner of Shakerbrook, an inspection firm in New Jersey. These will always be the best of the best from rain and snow. Look at sills and thresholds for cracks. Make sure caulking, weatherstripping, and glazing haven't split or worn away. Check all framing supports—rafters,

posts, bracing—for signs of deterioration caused by insects or rot. Probe wood with a screwdriver, looking for soft, flaking, crumbling, or damp spots. Keep an eye out for the most common made by termites or the most holes drilled by carpenter bees. And make sure all supports are still securely connected—check plywood held up to the footing or framing underneath. Be especially aware if the foundation has cracks or expanding fissures. "A crack that changes or goes into the structure is a sign of instability and should be looked at by a foundation expert," says Tim.

Your house's roof is also vulnerable, so you need to look closely at eaves and roofing for signs of failure. Signs of cracking on siding could mean water is running down the face and getting into walls. Use binoculars to look at the roof up close—in the flashing around, cracked, or missing? Are there cracks, missing shingles, crumbling gravel? Check for leaks, staining, or rotting shingles, wood for rot and splits, and also for breaks, like north brackets. You can sometimes go to the sun and see any day and morning, or the light. If you are daylight, water has a place to go.

But you don't always need the sun to see the problem. Next time there's a heavy rain, watch the water run off your house. You'll soon spot any big issues, such as how water gets into your basement or whether or not your sump pump runs on when it should.

### 3 GET THE INSIDE SCOOP

Sometimes you only discover structural issues by looking inside the house. Sagging floors, walls, and ceilings are obvious signs of trouble and rot. But seemingly innocuous problems, like peeling paint, cracking doors, loose floors, and popped drywall

panels can also be signs of trouble.

Then again, sometimes a sticking door is just a nuisance. But put it on your list as a sign—either down, right next to sagging floors and doorframes, loose beams and bowed joists, sagging stairs, and scraping drawers. Now it's time to take a look at ceiling, floor, and signs that they've worked their way loose. Listen to your feet for unusual sounds that signal more damage to the structure.

Be sure to look beyond the easy-to-reach areas. Take a flashlight into crawl spaces and corners under eaves, and up on the attic. That's where you'll see wildlife droppings from mice or other animals. While you're in the neighborhood, make sure joints and rafters are sound and undamaged. If you also need to look for cracks in the basement, check for signs of water damage and water in the basement. Check for signs of water damage and water in the basement.

### 4 LET THE WATER RUN

Remember that water isn't the only cause of water damage. A house's own plumbing will work better if it fails. Look for signs of leaks in unexpected places, or where they seem unlikely. Check for leaks in unexpected places, or where they seem unlikely. Check for leaks in unexpected places, or where they seem unlikely.

Look at fixtures that cracks that drip. TCM plumbing and heating expert Richard Timbrey points out that a leaking toilet or radiator could mean that a leak has compromised the floor. Likewise, a lower shower floor—can be covering up rot and water damage. And a shower and washing-machine hoses are vulnerable points if they get broke or aren't connected properly. Now is the time to put those little nagging problems on your plumbing repair list as well. Dropping floors and handles that you have to tighten more and more. Low water pressure may mean sediment has built up in faucet aerators and showerheads. Fill

shower and toilet water out all at once to test for slow leaks, which might indicate a clog or a blocked vent pipe. And you may not even know that your toilet runs until you step and listen for a few minutes to see if it clicks or rattles.

### 5 ALL STEVENS GO

If you haven't already done it, schedule your annual furnace maintenance—long before the first cold day. But you can be proactive by checking filters on schedule and keeping an eye out for leaks around the furnace or water tank.

One of the most overlooked hazards is a house's electrical system, so make sure of loose outlets, cords, and trip break boxes, which might fire away. Look for signs of electrical problems, such as arcing, sparks, or signs of discoloration. Plug a cheap non-GFCI receptacle and push that test and reset buttons until the light goes all red and then just look at the wires in all the outlets and carbon monoxide detectors.

In short, all the careful maintenance you leave you with a long repair list—made more of your best. But better that they come to you than the inside of things before the problem becomes more costly and dangerous. "When you get right down to it, inspecting your house is an act of prevention," says Tim. "It's a little bit of an act of prevention, it's a little bit of an act of prevention, it's a little bit of an act of prevention."



## Getting Professional Help

Professional home inspections aren't just for buyers. In-house systems inspections were complicated homeowners are turning to inspectors for ongoing advice. ASHI president Joe Corvino says it can start to get an inspection every five years or before holding major renovations. "The inspector will analyze all the systems and help prioritize repairs. That way you're getting a complete and unbiased picture from someone who's not trying to sell you anything."

Not all states require home inspections, and standards vary widely. A state is looking at inspectors certified by ASHI (ASHI.org). Expect to pay anywhere from \$250 to \$750 depending on where you live and the size of the house. Corvino says, "throughout the inspection should take two or more hours and result in a written report with digital photos. The inspector should go anywhere a homeowner fits, including out of the way crawl spaces. Besides a good flashlight, he should have a moisture meter (to measure wall wetness), an amp probe, leak detectors, and a contact-free gas detector to catch dangerous leaks."



TOP: Every homeowner has things that can break, such as a furnace or water heater. Here: Tim Silva checks for leaks in the basement. ABOVE: Richard Timbrey (right) is a volunteer for ASHI. He's a volunteer for ASHI.

**bonus checklist**

To download a free home inspection checklist, filling out this form and sending it to us at [info@homeinspection.com](mailto:info@homeinspection.com) or [www.homeinspection.com](http://www.homeinspection.com).

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- **Coolant:** Make your coolant level and the antifreeze/water mixture in the radiator checked.
- **Wiper Blades:** Inspect your windshield wiper blades whenever you fill up your car. If the rubber is cracked or frayed, replace them. All wiper blades should be changed once a year.

A perfect time for road trips—and potential breakdowns! Head off possible emergencies with these quick checks.

- **Oil Change:** Change with Castrol GTX High Mileage every 3 months or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first.
- **Fluids Check:** Since hot weather can cause some fluids to evaporate, have fluids checked: battery, brake, power steering, and transmission/transfer case, plus windshield washer solvent and especially the coolant.



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# Induction Cooktop

▶▶ Electromagnetic technology means fast cooking, high efficiency, and no more hot stove

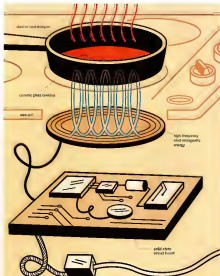
BY JOSEPH B. GAGNESE

ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CAMPBELL

HOME COOKS HAVE LEARNED TO DEAL with the inevitable drips and frustrations of working at the stove: seared steaks, singed dish towels, and time wasted waiting for the electric coil to heat up, followed by the clock of scraping that off the cooking surface when the coil is done. But a new generation of cooktops that use induction-heating technology may put us and those us conveniences. Induction heats food, as we see in control, simpler to clean, a bit safer to use—and it consumes 30 to 40 percent less energy than other cooking methods. It's a wonder we're still messing with fire at all.

The demonstration was certainly persuasive: A chef cracks an egg over a frying pan that's been cut in half. The part of the egg that lands on the burner is gone in a moment, but the part that hits the pan cooks slowly. Next he lays a hand-cut slice of salmon on the cooktop, and a pan is at it, and fires a chicken breast right through the Benjamin without scorching the paper. Seems like magic? Actually, it's all done with magnets.

Induction technology converts electricity into an intense electromagnetic field that "excites" the atoms inside cooking vessels, causing them to vibrate and heat up. The pan itself, not the cooktop, becomes the heating element as it absorbs the waves of magnetism and transfers that heat to the food. Only the wires inside the cooktop



## Cookware Compatibility

Does your cookware have what it takes—namely, iron—to work on an induction top? Put it to the test. Simply touch a refrigerator magnet to its outside surface. If it sticks, you're cooking. If it doesn't, the pot won't even get warm.

To overcome buyer resistance to replacing their pricey stock of stainless steels or forced-ferret cookware, some manufacturers are offering promotions. Buy an induction cooktop and get a free five-pot, plus a reduced-price hot plate.

stard as one you will get hot. That's why paper, cloth, or dish aren't affected in these demonstrations, and why you can't use cookware made of copper, aluminum, glass, or ceramic on these cooktops (see "Cookware Compatibility," right).

Induction is inherently more efficient than other cooking methods because every drop of energy goes directly into the pot or pan, leaving it evenly hot, not hotspots. "A little residual heat is transferred from the pot to the glass top, but it's nothing like a hot electric stove," says Frank Downing, director of product design at Electrolux. "So you don't have to worry about kids

coming up and scorching the stove." Plus, there's no waiting for a "batter" to cool. The electromagnetic waves cease the instant you shut it off.

Even when a burner is on, the magnetic energy stays under the surface—about half an inch directly above the surface. Small metal cups or measuring cups placed on a waiting burner won't get hot because it has no effect on metal objects less than 2½ inches across, but it could scramble magnetically sensitive items such as credit cards. (There's no worry for those with prosthetics, which operate at a different frequency.)

The first induction cooktops were introduced in Europe in the early 1970s. They appeared briefly in the U.S. in the '80s, but never caught on because of costly technology. Now Electrolux, Viking, Corgione, and other manufacturers have created the residential market with new and improved models. These companies are leading, in part, in America's "surge" energy-consciousness to make their units popular. That performance may be an easier sell. One 24-inch stainless-steel burner can bring 2 gallons of water to a boil in just 14 minutes, versus 24 minutes for a 12,500-Btu gas burner.

"There is nothing faster than induction—nothing," says Amir Gerges, managing director for manufacturer Dora de Provence in Toronto.

Performance of that caliber will set you back about three to four thousand dollars, depending on the size of the unit. And it may require you to upgrade your wiring in home, if you go for a top-of-the-line, 13.2-kilowatt cooktop. It will need a dedicated 6-gauge, 100-amp electrical cable leading directly to a 240-volt slot in the circuit-breaker panel. You may also have to get yourself some new pots and pans. But you'll get to give something up, too: the misery of slaving over a hot stove. ■



## WHAT IT IS

An electric-powered electric cooktop that converts heat to the cooktop instead of the burner. It's a solid-state, solid-state, solid-state. Only the cooktop is hot, not the burner. It's a solid-state.

## WHAT YOU WANT ONE

Just heat up the food. Induction cooktops are 30 to 40 percent more efficient than lower-energy bills. Cleanup is easy because food can't burn on the surface. It's a lot for high-end and the ability.

## HOW IT WORKS

Electric heat is transferred through a series of copper coils in the cooktop. The coils are under a magnetic glass top. The high-frequency electromagnetic waves, which cause the iron atoms in cookware to vibrate and heat up.

## WHAT IT COSTS

\$1,700 to \$2,700 for 30-inch cooktop; \$1,500 to \$1,800 for 36-inch.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Range of cooking modes. No, it won't do anything different for 10 to 12 inches across to handle larger pans.

## Product integration options

To move closer to the future, the first induction cooktop is the first induction cooktop.

## Automatic On and Off

The cooktop senses when you set a pot on the surface and begins heating. That's the first step when the pot is placed.

## WHO MAKES THEM

Electrolux, Viking, Dora de Provence, Corgione, and others.

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## Installing a Lamppost

BY ALEXANDRA BARNES  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KOLIN SMITH

LET THERE BE LIGHT—at least enough for people to get a glimpse of what treacherous terrain might lie underfoot as they approach your house. Enhance the topography with a lamppost, which will highlight the way for weary travelers and homebound housemates alike.

Installing one is simpler than you might think. A hole filled with concrete to help the post stand straight, and a narrow trench from house to post to carry the wire—you could do this all in a day, as *This Old House* technical editor Mark Farnes shows in the following pages.

Hooking up the wiring to the main box and creating a switch to turn the lamp on—for that you should consider getting a licensed electrician, but there's no reason (besides saving money) that you can't install the post and put the wire in the ground yourself. There's even some added satisfaction for your efforts: Your guests will thank you for your hospitality that much more when they can actually see their way to your front door.

**COST**  
\$75 to \$400, depending on the style and material of the lamp post, including fee for electrician.

**TIME**  
4 to 5 hours, including concrete set time.

**DIFFICULTY**  
Moderately easy. The shovel and bar work takes some strength, but the pieces come together fairly straightforwardly.

**Cost-conscious**  
Access, model Z-411, \$165 and fluted post, model Z-4990, \$45, both from Craftsman International.



FOR COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS,  
TURN THE PAGE AND UNFOLD

### TOOLS FOR THIS PROJECT



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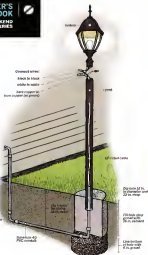
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## overview

### shopping list

**1 | LANTERN** One fixture that shines for you! The lantern is used to illuminate the post.

**2 | POST** There could be only a few styles—fixed, not fixed with a without a center. The center is just decorative, it's not the lantern's holder. It's best to order the post from the same manufacturer as the lantern to be sure that the lantern fits.

**3 | WIRE** You'll need 1/2-inch wire for wire enough to reach from the house to the post outside, including an extra foot for the post. Get 12 gauge wire which will look 15- and 20-amp circuits.

**4 | CONDUIT** To avoid code for long-term underground, you'll need 1/2-inch Schedule 40 PVC pipe which is gray and comes in 10-foot lengths. Make sure to get enough additional conduit for the necessary items coming out of the house down to the trench and up to the post for the post.

**5 | PVC CEMENT** You'll need for cementing the pipe into the ground.

**6 | 1/2-INCH GRAVEL** To fill the bottom of the post hole.

**7 | CONCRETE MIX** Concrete is a mixture of cement sand and aggregate. You can buy bags of the ingredients, or you can get 20-gallon bags of concrete mix.

**8 | WIRE PINS** To connect the wires to the post. These are used to connect the wires to the post. They should be right for 12-gauge wire, but check the range of sizes at the post to be sure.

## step by step

# 1

### Dig for the post and wires

Using a post-hole digger or round shovel, make a hole at the post location 12 inches wide and 22 inches deep (RIGHT). Fill the bottom of the post hole with 6 inches of gravel.

Use a wire mesh to create a vertical 18-inch deep channel from the post hole to the house.

Place soil on a tarp as you dig so you don't bury the surrounding grass or plants.



### Lay the wiring

Dry fit enough PVC conduit towards the house to the post location. Where necessary, cut the pieces to length with a hand saw.

Attach elbows to bring the conduit away from the house and down into the trench, then up from the trench at the post. Add a vertical piece to the above inside the post hole long enough to stick up 6 inches higher than the ground.

Connect all the conduit pieces with PVC cement, making sure that all the elbows are oriented correctly before the cement dries.

Thread 12-gauge UF wire through the pipe. Leave short ends at the post location and enough slack at the house to reach through the walls and to the breaker box.

Lie the pipe, with the wires inside, in the trench (LEFT). Backfill the trench with soil.

To prevent soil from spilling into the post hole as you backfill the trench, temporarily wedge a piece of short piece of lumber into the space where the two meet.



### Pour a concrete footing

Mix a batch of concrete in a neighbor's wheelbarrow one bag at a time. Keep the mix stiff (not too much water). Use a shovel to mix and shorten the set time. The concrete should hold its shape, but jiggle it when the batch is poured.

Shovel the concrete into the post hole, stop the gravel (RIGHT), being careful not to get any in the conduit or on the wires. Fill the hole to grade or just below it, leaving about 6 inches of conduit exposed.

Using a concrete trowel or piece of dry wood, smooth the top of the footing.

Use your shovel to chop plenty of the concrete as you fill the hole, which will help eliminate air pockets.





# 4

44. Install the post in the footing.

Working carefully but quickly lay the post next to the hole and pull the wire through it from bottom to top.

With the concrete still wet, slide the shaft of the post over the conduit and 12 inches into the footing (1.5 FT). Working back the wire still protrude from the top of the post. Then, the post as you put downward pressure on it to work it into the concrete.

**TIP** ▶ Before setting the post, mark it with pencil 12 inches up from its bottom so you'll know how deep to plant it in the footing.

## Plumb and brace the post 30

Whip two or three strips of ropes around the pool and stake them into the ground a few feet away, which will brace the pool by pulling it in opposing directions.

Hold sleeve vertically against the post in several spots around its circumference to check if it is plumb (RIGHT). Adjust the straps as necessary to hold it tightly in position.

Allow the concrete to further completely settle removing the shims—at least two hours.

On very hot days, mist the concrete with water twice a garden hose once or twice to strengthen the cure and keep it from cracking.



# 5

## 6

#### 44 Connect the lantern

Once the concrete is hard enough to hold the post without straps, use utility knife to carefully peel away about 3/4 inches of the thick gray insulation from the U" cable coming out of the post to reveal the three wires encased in it: white, black, and a bare copper (or green) ground. These correspond to like-colored wires on the lantern. Use wire strippers to take away the sheathing and expose 1/2 inch of bare conductor on all the colored wires from the post and lantern.

Four (the wires have the letters to choose from the post, matching white to white, black to black, and bare copper to bare copper (or green). Twist on wire nuts to hold the pairs together (L&FT)

Slide the lantern on the post. Tighten its set screws to hold it in place.

Have a licensed electrician connect the wires to the breaker box and install a switch for the light in a convenient location.

For more information contact us at: [info@eddy.com](mailto:info@eddy.com) or [www.eddy.com](http://www.eddy.com)

## { buying guide }

The lantern—the part of the light that sits on top of the post—dictates the style of the unit as a whole. Here are a few of our favorite designs.



cont. [Home](#)

Two alcohol-free globe shapes recall urban public stations but hint at a well-run residential setting. *Style*, vol. 2002-03, from *See Staff*, 1999, 2002.



**JAPANESE FLAIR**

The angles of Asian architecture shine through in this sleek design. Goodlight, by Maxine Lighting International. 2002.



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The earlier window of a Craftsman bungalow obscures this twin addition by Thomas Lighting, about \$1,100 per foot, says the maker.



A traditional highway strip works just as well: stop-a-pool on in the hotel lobby, from Thomas & Looney, 2004.



**Epitome** "The main purpose for the kitchen renovation was to get the house closer to the way it was when it was built. The house is a well-preserved example of early 20th-century architecture, and the kitchen was the only room that had been completely replaced. The new kitchen was designed to blend the old with the new, and to provide a functional space for the family." — *John Carter, owner*

**CHALLENGE** A GREAT OLD HOUSE MANAGES TO SURVIVE THE DECADES INTACT. THE KITCHEN, IN PARTICULAR, IS A CHALLENGING TASK. IT'S A ROOM THAT'S BEEN REBUILT SO MANY TIMES IT'S HARD TO TELL WHAT'S ORIGINAL. THE SECRET IS TO PRESERVE THE ORIGINAL FEATURES AND ADD NEW DETAILS THAT BLEND WITH THE OLD.

In 1900, the kitchen was a small room, barely big enough for a stove and sink. The owner, John Carter, wanted to enlarge the kitchen to provide a more functional space for the family. He hired a local contractor to build a new kitchen that would blend with the old. The new kitchen was built with the same materials as the old, and the details were carefully matched to the original. The result is a kitchen that is both functional and beautiful, and that perfectly blends the old with the new.



After years of ignoring the more's rambling exterior and accompanying the Rapsons finally decided to give the house the kitchen it deserved. They connected contemporary art with the midweek found in the rest of the house, as well as some 11th-century houses, including granite counter tops, a built-in crockery, stone, two-sided appliances, and recessed lighting—with natural limestone to the room's long front. They also wanted to add some adjoining space to separate, but lovely, banister room with a fireplace where their two children, 8 and 12, could do homework, play computer games, and stay out of their parents' way while they pre-ponderate. And to keep the house out of track of its guests, they placed a storage-packed mudroom, where the family could deposit money coats and shopping bags.

"Every house in Minnesota needs a mudroom," says Gail. But unlike some, who cry to Xanadu their homes with address the use of simple hangers, the Rapsons were under no illusion for something that respected the scale, style, and, most of all, the preservation of the house's original bones. They needed a designer well-versed enough in historic architecture to do the job right. Enter David Hede.

When planning remodels or additions for older houses, Hede tries simply to further the original architect's vision. For instance, he knew that back when the Rapsons' house was built, the kitchen played second fiddle to no more formal dining and living areas, so he didn't want to squeeze them. He respected the Rapsons' desire to keep the scale of any additions in line with that of the house's other rooms, and went even further by suggesting they install house-finished light fixtures in the kitchen that wouldn't outshine the elegant house now used in the front of the house. "Historically, simpler fixtures would be used in the kitchen, while more elaborate brass ones would be used in the formal rooms of the house," says Hede, whose roster designed all of the new light fixtures, was a salvaged chandelier in the breakfast room.

To fabricate his cabinetry and millwork designs, Hede turned to St. Paul cabinetmaker Jon Frost, a frequent collaborator on the historically accurate additions and as models for tactics. "What David does as a designer makes us really well suited for our market," says Frost. "We have both been students of period cabinetry for a long time, and there are not a lot of architects or designers as interested in, and as well educated about, the intricate details of old



**BEFORE** The 1994 house had a classic four-square plan with one room in each corner. **AFTER** The new breakfast room claims the outdoor party-turned-sitting-down and lounge as its territory. The new kitchen is now a more similar to those of the other rooms in the house. Adding the mudroom required relocating the back entry and clipping a corner of the original kitchen where a space-hogging 3-by-6-foot island was replaced with a smaller 2-by-5-foot one.

**Epiphany, Not Lull**  
Designer David Hede suggested raising the addition two stories with the mudroom and breakfast room downstairs and an expanded master suite upstairs, so the bump-out wouldn't be clashing with the house's naturally busy configuration. **After Lull** A view from the breakfast room shows how the kitchen's new cherry-limb chandelier fits the 100-year-old oak front-end better, warming in the dining room.



**Openings, Sp.** A view of the kitchen and adjacent mudroom from the breakfast room. A closed glass-paned window above the breakfast room window and window in the mudroom room help bring natural light to the west-facing interior.

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## Secrets of Seamless Renovations

### ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture. The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture.

### SCALE & PROPORTION

The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture. The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture.

### ADDITIONAL FEATURES

The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture. The house was built in the early 1900s, and the renovation was done in a style that was consistent with the original architecture.

house is to do it." While first he worked on a study a Montana landscape in his day, he calls the "cupboard" house a gem. "It's just as nicely proportioned in terms of its woodwork," he says.

The Ruppers chose western cherry for the kitchen and mudroom, and the breakfast room's solid oak. Not only does it blend perfectly with the new granite countertops, which are speckled with beige, gray, and salmon accents, cherry also blends nicely with oak, so even wood, it will tie in with the rich oak and mahogany used in the other rooms. For the mudroom they chose Douglas fir with a vertical grain—spicy looking, but also fairly inexpensive. The year ago, when it was often the material of choice for informal kitchens and back entries.

Instead of a simple desk in the breakfast room, Wade opted for a decorative media workstation with designated space for a computer, television, two large filing cabinets, a small nook, and plenty of cubbies for the kids' school materials and Gail's supplies. In choosing the built-ins, Wade tried to replicate the simple look of free-

standing furnishings that would have been popular during the turn of the 20th century. "We took the language of the period and used a modern modern language," he says. "That allows the period style of the room to prevail."

But designing a historically inspired addition doesn't mean you can't improve a little. One of the main eye-catching aspects of this project is the dramatic porcelain floor tiles in the breakfast room and mudroom. So as a Victorian house, it's not the house, and a simple pattern for the floor, the tile adds a touch of color that informs the more subdued wood tones that dominate the house. While not usually found in case of the century living space, such flooring elements here add the best mix of old and new.

In the end, despite their total renovation, the Ruppers got exactly what they were after a bigger, more modern space in which they can spend more time together as a family, and one that doesn't conflict with the historic elements that made the house noteworthy to begin with. "We took a chance, and it turned out beautifully," says Gail. ■

For more on this renovation, visit [www.bobcarroll.com](http://www.bobcarroll.com) or call 800-451-1010.

# BREEZY RETREAT

*How to cut costs on a new three-season porch. Result: a room across doors with panels that ramp up for glass*



ON THE BORDER THAT DIVIDES INDOORS AND OUT sits the screened porch architecture every good response to the scorching sun, lightning storms, and biting bugs of late summer. For one afternoon spent in this iconic place, it never occurs to you that how to extend its pleasures beyond the sultry months.

A season's spanning porch was just what the owner of this Cape Cod-style cottage had in mind when she approached local building contractor Guy DiGiovanni. She dreamed of cooling a bright, airy room where she could relax on warm May evenings with her friends on chilly October afternoons. And as creative director in the fashion industry, she had ideas about how she wanted the space to look. Handmade, handmade flooring, whitewashed walls with traditional moldings, panel and picture details, and a vaulted beamed ceiling with exposed beams.

BY N. BJORKIE C. GAGE  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM P. STEELE  
STYLING BY MATTHEW MATTIELLO



As with the porch's vaulted ceiling and subterranean corner, outside-out, the porch is a perfect blend of old and new. The white-painted 16-by-16-inch steel with ornate wrought-iron accents and stone window masonry. Customized iron is crafted through custom-fitted in-line framework's well-proportioned pillars. The room's open-plan design allows the space to flow seamlessly into the rest of the house.



With the porch walls built, painters can finish painting the only windows from the outside now. **BOTTOM:** The blue porch walls appear color fast enough to the sun (left) and upland. The blue is a custom paint that is more resistant to fading than standard exterior paint. The porch was built by the owner, who is a professional painter. The porch was built by the owner, who is a professional painter. The porch was built by the owner, who is a professional painter.



net original, the builder explains, but it's one that makes a lot of sense. "I think about it I could change you to build custom-fitted porch screens on site, or I could measure out the frame work to accommodate standard-size wood doors and cut down my labor costs by about a third."

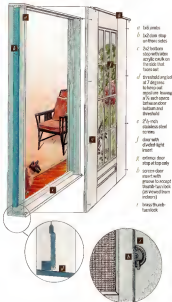
While many companies around the country make wooden screens and porch panels, Clemons typically uses sturdy Fendress porch doors (as described by CDC (Combination Door Company), a fourth-generation steel fabricator in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin). The style she chose for this project in Bridgehampton, New York, even comes with a true divided-light insert to match the French doors that lead into the kitchen. The screens are held in place with heavy stainless-steel latches—"a beautiful thing," from the owner's point of view, "since it means we don't have to screw a bunch of hardware into every panel, which we get pretty tedious." The sturdy sprouted mechanism (no tools required) also makes life easier for the homeowner when it's time to remove the screens to remove them for cleaning or repairs.

Instead of the home's large entryway kitchen and adjacent dining room, the addition measures 16 feet 6 inches by 19 feet 11 inches and uses a total of 14 doors—a dozen of them stationary and two hinged at 180 degrees to create a wide double entry. "Guy convinced me to make the room to be as possible, and to put it straight out into the backyard to expose their flag walls to the ocean breezes," says the owner. Coling says, "I want a great view of the ocean from the kitchen, not just a view of the ocean from the kitchen."

The resulting room is one of the most well-thought parts of the house and the whole place just bigger. "This is where everyone wants to sit now—in the dining room, family room, and living room," she owner says. "I'm in the end of winter when I look out through the French doors, it's like the summer." ■

## BUILDING PORCH WALLS FROM DOORS

Screen doors with stainless-steel screws to glass panels have been around for decades—CDC has been manufacturing them since the early 1930s. Back in the 1950s, a few manufacturers and homeowners had started putting them in even big old-fashioned screened porches for those porches that were 10 years old. Today with the kind of labor-saving every bit of space is being used, using combination door doors to create these screen room is a more popular option. Says Dan Schmitt, the president of CDC's founder, there is now that company's door system works installed as porch walls—most notably



She was also sure she'd never be able to build it all at once. "I was convinced that so do it right, I'd have to build the screen in stages over a few years. First the deck, then the porch roof, then the screening. Then later, maybe add windows," she recalls. "Guy suggested a way to make the whole thing affordable at once."

The porch advice: Go ahead and build the addition you want but, instead of installing custom screens and windows, use stock windows screen doors with stainless-steel screws and window inserts in stationary porch panels. "When you get a cool, the panels' screens can be lifted out and swapped for divided-light inserts of tempered glass, creating the porch screen along with the available living space."

"With a three-screen room, you don't need to create a five-screen, install heating or planing systems, or instead the way you do with a year-round addition, as you start using together," says Clemons. En playing back doors as porch panels into the kitchen as a top feature, clearing the need for a lot of extra on-site carpentry and custom millwork. "Basically, you put in pans and proffers, frame out the roofing, lay the deck, pop in the door display-style, and do the finish carpentry—which can be as simple as it is inside as you want," says Clemons. The idea is

The molding in a room should complement the  
molding in the room it's in. It should be  
different, but not too different. And it  
should be different from the molding in the  
room it's in. It should be different from the  
molding in the room it's in. It should be  
different from the molding in the room it's in.

by Harry Savoy  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY Erika L. Green

# Building character

Whether it's crown, casing, or simply the most basic trim,  
wood molding adds style to any room—and value to your home



Mills keep stock molding in hand, organically  
adding character to the end grain of some  
of their products. Many of the pieces and their  
uses have changed since the woodworkers  
first began building in the 19th century.

*a*

ROMAN-INSPIRED INTERIOR BUILDINGS THEY described molding as the “alphabet of culture.” On the surface, these carved-wood pieces on more decorative steps, but they have a more complex purpose. Through the play of light and shadow on their profiles, they soften the transition from a wall to the adjacent windows, ceilings, floors, and doors. Considered together, they enhance a room’s proportion and scale. And they reflect a house’s architectural style, often reflecting a building’s era and the wealth and taste of its owner.

In the early days of American settlement, such ornamentation didn’t come cheap—carpenters hand-planed their moldings. But after the Civil War, manufacturers used all manner of machines to mass-produce basic parts, enabling builders to craft ornate and even more from a catalog of affordable profiles. The trend climaxed with the high style of late-19th-century Queen Anne and Neoclassical homes.

Such conservatism fell out of favor a couple of decades later, when builders in the Craftsman style long single molding as a display of the wood’s inherent beauty, full, without the filigree, a more less important—Craftsman pioneer Gustav Stickley wrote that molding should “have each room as interesting in itself as it is as a complete before a single piece of furniture is put into it.” But after World War II, during the American housing boom, such ornamentation was scaled back or discarded altogether with the minimalist of the Modern style. Molding was deemed either too ornate or essential.

With the passion for renovation of the past 30 years came a molding renaissance. From booby to baroque, the options are endless, and homeowners choose to add or remove decorations, bringing splendor to a room and a higher grade value—to their homes. Hardware stores and home centers stock popular styles, and mills keep the different kinds that cut historic profiles ready for the milling machines. Many will even graft new bases onto a classic or sample, the way American Cedar and Millwork in Millersville, Maryland, does. Their shop offers the profiles shown on these pages—as well as clear-cutters made from their collection, or for any custom mill, a homeowner looking to dress up a house can choose a cut of piece that give proportion and beauty to an otherwise awkward or ugly.

## THE CLASSICS

American moldings reflect the ornamental elements of classical architecture, and their position on the wall is analogous to the parts of a Greek column. The first 3 feet up from the floor—the base—through the chair rail—roughly corresponds to a column’s pedestal. The blank space of wall or field represents the column’s shaft. A detailed strip of crown caps the wall, much like the entablature can cap the top of the column.

American moldings fall into two classical orders: Roman and Greek. Roman profiles, which appear as Georgian and Federal houses of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, use motifs and curves that conform to a perfect circle. Greek moldings, which came into favor in the 1820s with the Greek Revival style, have elongated curves before transitioning into a perfect circle. These were thought to reflect light better.

### crown

Originally designed to catch water where plaster walls meet ceilings, crown molding is called the “spring” of the room. It is commonly by cutting 30- or 45-degree away from the wall. This measurement is called the “spring angle.” The profile is more complex when it is cut away from the wall. It is called the “spring angle.” The profile is more complex when it is cut away from the wall. It is called the “spring angle.”

### chair rail

Typically featuring a pronounced round element, chair rail moldings contribute to protect chair backs from scraping against walls. They’re about 30 inches high from the floor and extend the upper wall or field molding to begin. The chair rail protects the wall from chipping and staining, giving it a sense of order and stability. It is the “shoulder” beneath the unadorned field.

### casing

Casing is a trim that is used to finish the wall edges of doors and windows. It is typically by cutting 30- or 45-degree away from the wall. This measurement is called the “spring angle.” The profile is more complex when it is cut away from the wall. It is called the “spring angle.”

### base

Baseboards are decorative moldings that run along the bottom of the wall. They are typically 30 inches high from the floor and extend the lower wall or field molding to begin. The base protects the wall from chipping and staining, giving it a sense of order and stability. It is the “shoulder” beneath the unadorned field.

For more information on moldings and baseboards, visit [www.woodworkusa.com/moldings](http://www.woodworkusa.com/moldings).



Chair rail

Crown



Crown

Chair rail



By John Peter Casey  
Photographs by Deborah Widener Lindelyn

## Polishing Up a Craftsman Gem

The shingles were rotted, the plaster was soggy and squatters had littered the place. But original diamond-pane windows, heart-pine floors, and one-of-a-kind mantels made this 1910 house the buy of one man's lifetime.

Homeowner John Peter Casey releases on his front porch where the relatives he inherited on an old view. With a friend's help, he was replaced 30 percent of the house's outer shingles, staining and by hand-painted orange paint. Brightens the front door he found after weeks scouring antique shops.

TRANSFORMATIONS



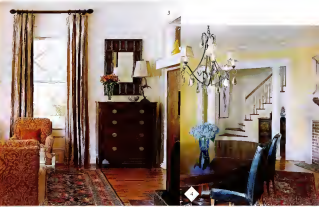


1 To break the bathroom two days to make the kitchen a new terra-cotta tile wall-lined and followed by three months of hard work built to a high value. The glossy finish is new for maintenance through to additional nearby projects.

2 Bought at a local antique market. The copper kitchen sink is water for less than \$100 in the center.

3 It took three weeks to make all the diamond-pane windows in the house, installing new hardware and sand chips and weights.

4 A wall-mounted table may be the prettiest addition to the second floor, which required a rocky better suited to the other side back of the house. Salvaged columns frame the opening to the dining room.



## “What have I gotten myself into?”

The question just kept running through my head. It was May, six months since I'd bought the almost century-old bungalow, and here I was, standing out in my half-dug house, shoveling in a dirt with no door, mopping up after each working, and wondering when I might actually be able to make a meal in my still-incomplete and crowded kitchen.

I had dreamed of living in the area—Virginia Heights—since I moved to Atlanta 23 years ago, but the neighborhood had always been out of my price range. Then a local nurse told me in a 1910 Craftsman that she thought had my name written all over it. It was a small wreck, which fortunately was reflected in the price.

When it went to see the house, I was immediately

taken by its old diamond-paned windows and original beam-pane floors. There were no bad additions, and its woodwork wasn't buried in layers of paint. I now planned to make the two-story house into a showplace and, once successfully, into a house. It was a goal that just avoided polishing up.

I knew that removing the place would take real elbow grease on my part. The cottage was crawling in, the plaster was crumbling, and several windows were broken. The exterior shingles were mostly rotting, and—on I would later find out—were the front door and some joists and flooring. A former owner had used a hole saw to fix the roof after a tree fell on the study, leaving the interior vulnerable to the elements. Water and gas lines had been shut off so long that local utilities had no

record of the place. The whole second floor was an unbroken attic, and the 1,600-square-foot of living space downstairs included just two bedrooms and one bath—enough space for the pair of squatters apparently living there before the place was put up for sale.

Still, it was love at first sight.

In November 2004, I sold my old house and raised money, so I could afford my \$300,000 dream. Then I thought this was too much money for such a dump, and people tried to convince me I would be better off tearing it down and building new. But there were so many wonderful things about the house, I just couldn't. In fact, I'd gotten through every even materials that were beyond hope—like every inch of plaster.

I spent the better part of the last fall tackling the

renovator's biggest project: demolition. I've attended other houses, so I was pretty used to the dirty work, which let fill in my attic and hair every day for a month. But this time the broken windows and lack of heat had me shivering underneath the layers of dirt. Filling the two Dumpsters got me over the winter but from didn't make me a favorite on the block either. But one neighbor was kind enough to let me use his garden hose to wash my hands, since the new plumbing had yet to be installed.

Teaming up with Todd Pivner, a designer I had worked with before, I started to plan how I could keep the integrity of the house while making it more comfortable. I wanted to create guest rooms for family and friends on the second floor, but at the time the only way to get up there was a rocky backside ladder nailed to rafters in



## What I Did

**Restored a century-old** longhouse, keeping its historic original structure and details while carving out more living space. **Remodeling cost:** About \$125,000. **Time from start to finish:** 18 months. **Where I lived:** Using salvaged materials and buying light fixtures at a going-out-of-business sale. **What I enjoyed:** The quality master beds with their shaved ends, and the master suite, and some very fine fixtures. **What I would do differently:** Put a skylight in the hallway above the stairwell from the beginning—no planning to do it now. **Biggest challenge:** Figuring out how to put in a permanent staircase and configuring the second floor space. **How I achieved it:** Moved a lot of walls in the hallway.

**BEFORE, LEFT:** It was hard to restore the water-damaged plaster throughout the house, including in the living room (TOP) and front hall (BOTTOM). (See houseowner's email and red-lined rest of the windows and trim.)



1 Helping my handyman friend cut the plumbing for the upstairs toilet room a few weeks before and after learning carpentry. Says the homeowner: In this photo, he made the vanity from an old dresser. 2 The brick chimney stack runs from the top of the house down to the second floor and was incorporated for its tough appearance. 3 Another guest bedroom looks out through elegant patterned panes into the garden. 4 The ground-floor master beds were installed in a former bedroom and the existing brickwork still is accommodated for gas logs. The same brickwork remains in the living room (left) where the fireplace is. The homeowner saved the original brick, however, for use in future landscaping projects.

the back of the house. I wasn't sure where to put a new staircase. Todd recommended windowing the center hall for the new stairs and getting a powder room underneath them. With his help, I added two more beds upstairs as well as three bedrooms. I also hired an engineer to help me bring the second floor up to code, which involved replacing the existing 2x6 floor joists with 2x10s and 2x12s.

I got behind schedule and had to stay in my master suite for a few more weeks than I had planned. It couldn't have been longer, though, since I was driving 12 miles each way for my night job, managing a restaurant located just blocks from my new house. So, in May 2005, six months after starting the renovation, I moved in. With only partial use of one bedroom and minimal use of the kitchen, I was stuck by making my tooth and washing the coffee pot at the same sink and eating dinner at work for another couple of months.

The most frustrating detail was probably the kitchen. Along with those in the master beds, the kitchen's floor joists had to be supported in order to handle the weight of the terra-cotta floor tile and limestone countertops I planned to put in.

Someone had told me there was a great place to get limestone countertops called Fabricators Corner. When I checked the company out, though, I learned that they specialized in landscape gas logs. For they and they would cut countertops for me—I just had to have templates made, which I did for about \$500.

The supplier offered to deliver the stone for \$75, a bargain for not having to deal with transporting the heavy 25-lb slabs. Unfortunately, when I opened the back of the truck I found that the company was the rock hole instead.

For more on adding living space without adding on, visit [remodelaholic.com](http://remodelaholic.com).

PHOTO: JAMES HARRIS



had broken in half, so I saw everything back. The company would return the piece at no charge but not redeliver it.

So on June 17—my birthday—I got a couple of beds and built a makeshift rack on the back of my truck, under a wooden board on the back of my truck, under a wooden board on the back of my truck, under a wooden board on the back of my truck. I drove with over 700 pounds in back, worried that each pebble I saw on the road would break one of the three beds. At home, the right guys I'd hired to help me were waiting to move the stone and the concrete into place. When the last piece was in, I realized that the beds had been cut in the wrong place. Needless to say, that was not what I wanted for my birthday. So the supplier had to return the stone for a second time.

While getting the limestone was stressful, the counters look great and were very cheap. I paid \$700 for everything, saving about \$2,000. The point is that it was for everyone, though. If you put down a bottle of olive oil or tomato sauce with a wisp of butter on it, it'll have a rag that won't completely come out.

To help with repairs throughout the house, I recruited my friend and self-taught handyman, Walter Morris. He helped me replace 95 percent of the old shingles on the house and replace most of the windows. We took the corner molding off each window frame, labeling the pieces so we could reuse them. Then we put in new mahogany and ropes and replaced some of the hardware that had been painted shut.

Since the placement of windows in the back of the

house needed to be changed to accommodate the new 34-inch high counters in the kitchen and the wider bed in the master bedroom, we moved some of the other parts of the house. I also moved all of the glass from the back windows to replace the small broken pieces in some of the windows we salvaged. I love the imperfections of the old glass.

In fact, it's all the imperfections of my home that give it character. I just have to watch for something that was built by hand a hundred years ago that I wanted to return it back to its glory days—though I also want it to be comfortable for modern life. One of my favorite places has become the study. Its pecker doors, which were salvaged from another home, and old brick fireplace are remnants of another time. And now, new gas logs keep the place nice and cozy against drafts from the large original windows that I love so much. ■

### Tell us your story

Describe your house and the work of the year you did it. If you see it in the house, show your project. Please send copies of before and after photos, a floor plan (we cannot return any materials), and a brief description of the work you did to:

**This Old House/Transformations**  
12314 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor  
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Or e-mail photos and information to: [transformations@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:transformations@thisoldhouse.com)

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QUICK REFERENCE AT A GLANCE

## HARDWOOD FLOORING PROS AND CONSIDERATIONS

### PROS

#### APPEARANCE IMPROVES WITH AGE

Hardwood acquires a desirable patina over time.

#### LONG LASTING

Hardwood is among the longest lasting of all flooring types.

#### GREAT INVESTMENT

Hardwood increases the value of your home.

#### CAN BE REFINISHED

Allows you to refresh your floor to its original look.

#### EASY CARE & MAINTENANCE

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#### HAT SCRATCH

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#### FULL BATH INSTALLATION NOT RECOMMENDED

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#### TRANSITIONS TO OTHER FLOORS

A new hardwood floor may be a different height than the floor it adjoins. Thinner profile wood and transition strips will help to equalize the difference.



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**TIP:** "Large floor-to-ceiling windows combined with bold, unexpected wall colors make a great palette for the rich beauty of a hardwood floor."

- Larry Burns  
Award-Winning Designer  
Houston, CHG (Color Marketing Group)



QUICK REFERENCE AT A GLANCE

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##### PROS

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###### LONG-LASTING

Extremely durable and far less apt to scratch than wood.

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Exceptionally easy to install. Interlocking floating pieces stick to each other with no glue, rather than to the subfloor.

###### EASY AREA-TO-AREA TRANSITIONS

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###### CHILD AND PET FRIENDLY

Superior durability for active households.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

### CANNOT BE REFINISHED

Unlike hardwood floors, laminate cannot be refinished or recoated.

### SHORTER LIFE EXPECTANCY THAN NATURAL PRODUCTS

Five to 30 years is on par with other types of manufactured flooring, but considerably less than that of "real" materials.

### "HOLLOW" SOUND IF NOT INSTALLED WITH CORRECT UNDERLAYMENT

Laminate's construction and installation method can create hollow sounds when walked on. Using the correct underlayment eliminates or reduces this problem.

### ADD LESS VALUE TO YOUR HOME THAN NATURAL PRODUCTS

Laminate does not have the same perceived value of the natural materials it mimics.



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**TIP:** "Laminate has the look of rich wood and other natural materials without the cost or maintenance. It's also easier on your feet, compared to real stone. Why not use laminate as a great alternative?"

— Kadi Olson

Interior Designer and Space Planner/  
Member AIA (American Society of Interior Designers)

QUICK REFERENCE AT A GLANCE



**TIP:** Vinyl is the perfect solution when you need an original graphic design, plus low-impact flooring. Flooring.

## VINYL SHEET FLOORING PROS AND CONSIDERATIONS

### PROS

#### BROADEST RANGE OF COLORS & DESIGNS

Natural and original graphic visuals.

#### A GREAT BUY

Value-priced vinyl sheet is one of the best buys in flooring.

#### COMFORT AND RESILIENCE

Vinyl is easier to stand on for long periods of time, compared with other hard surface flooring.

#### LOW MAINTENANCE

Vinyl requires minimal maintenance — much less than any other flooring category.

#### WATER RESISTANT

Vinyl doesn't absorb liquids so it's suitable for any room of the house, especially bathrooms and kitchens.

#### INSTALL ANYWHERE

Vinyl can be used in any room and any level of your home, over most subfloors (except carpet).

#### VIRTUALLY SEAMLESS

Vinyl sheet is 6' or 12' feet wide, which creates a more uniform-looking installation.

#### ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

Made with recycled materials and is FloorScore® certified.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

##### WILL NOT INCREASE HOME'S VALUE

Compared to other natural flooring products

##### EASIER TO RIP OR GOUGE

Thinner vinyl is more susceptible to gouging and other durability problems. For high-traffic areas, it's best to install thicker and higher quality vinyl.

##### NOT AS DO-IT-YOURSELF FRIENDLY AS OTHER FLOORING

Vinyl is not too complicated to install, but it does require precision and preparation.

#### Q

Subfloors shrink and expand with temperature and humidity fluctuations.



See floors in your very own room!  
Choose from dozens of inspiring room scenes or upload a photo of your own.  
Share your ideas by e-mail.  
Visit [armstrong.com](http://armstrong.com) to purchase your copy!



#### WANT TO KNOW EVEN MORE ABOUT FLOORING?

We'd like to help you choose the flooring that's right for you and to make the final selection as simple and worry-free as possible. We've put together a user-friendly consumer guide to flooring that can provide all the basics and answer your questions, even before you ask. Go to [armstrong.com](http://armstrong.com) to request a complimentary copy of our 40-page handbook and view our complete online flooring education section.



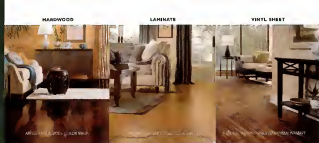
[armstrong.com/qa](http://armstrong.com/qa)

#### QUICK REFERENCE AT A GLANCE

	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS	LIFESTYLE/PERFORMANCE	INCREASES HOME VALUE
<b>HARDWOOD</b>	Natural beauty that's warm and inviting. Complements any style of décor. A wide variety of domestic and exotic species, stains, gloss levels, edge details, widths and textures.	Properly maintained hardwood floors may last a lifetime.	Adds value to your home.
<b>LAMINATE</b>	Highly detailed photographic images and realistic textures that replicate the look of natural materials such as hardwood, stone, and ceramic.	Most manufacturers warrant laminate floors for 20 years or more.	Does not add as much value as natural materials.
<b>VINYL VINYL</b>	The largest array of designs and colors of any floor category. Looks range from natural materials to original graphic designs. State-of-the-art embossing and texturing for superior imagery and feel.	Bottom quality vinyl floors have warranties from 5-20 years against stains, rips, tears and gouges.	Does not add as much value as natural materials.



PRODUCT COSTS	CARE & MAINTENANCE	INSTALLATION METHOD	CHILD/ PET FRIENDLY	
1 1/4" thick. \$3.39 - \$4.45/sq. ft.  5/16" thick. \$3.29 - \$4.99/sq. ft.	Sweep & mop occasionally with no-wax floor cleaner. Sand and refinish every 15-25 yrs.	Solid: Nail, staple, or glue. Depends on thickness. Engineered: Glue, staple, float and interlocking. Over wood, concrete or existing floor (except carpet).	Can scratch. Pooled liquids can damage surface and warp boards.	HARDWOOD
\$2.99 - \$6.00/sq. ft.	Vacuum and mop occasionally with no-wax floor cleaner.	Interlocking floating construction (no glue needed). Tongue and groove locking over wood, concrete or existing floor (except carpet).	Pooled liquids can damage flooring.	LAMINATE
\$2.49 - \$4.99/sq. ft.	Sweep & mop with a vinyl floor cleaner.	Jolt backing: Full spread or perimeter adhesive. Fiberglass backing: Loose lay, modified loose lay or full spread. Both constructions install over concrete, hardwood, plywood or existing floor (except carpet).	Very good choice for homes with children and pets.	VINYL SHEET



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hardwood floors

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101<sup>ST</sup>  
ISSUE  
SPECIAL  
SECTION

# 101

TIME-**SAVING**,  
MONEY-**SAVING**,  
MARRIAGE-**SAVING**, LIFE-**SAVING**,  
REALLY-**USEFUL**-TO-ANY-HOMEOWNER

# TIPS

Compiled by John Kenney

Illustrations by Edwin Fotheringham  
Photographs by Ernie Larsen

When you're in the middle of redoing your bathroom, you don't want to be the guy who hauls a cast-iron tub up four flights of stairs only to discover that the drain hole is at the wrong end. Or turns his thumb into Salisbury steak because he had the bright idea to use a framer's waffle-faced hammer to drop in a finish nail. We know, because we've been that guy. And now that we've learned things the hard way, we'd like to save you from making our mistakes. So we've assembled this collection of 101 of our most practical around-the-house tips, culled from the pages of our first 100 issues.

Such a body of information couldn't come from a single source. In addition to a legion of savvy writers, editors, builders, architects, and designers, we've also had the benefit of more than a century of collective wisdom accrued by a bunch of guys who were experts before. This Old House even came on the scene: master carpenter Norm Abram, general contractor Tom Silva, plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey, and landscape contractor Roger Cook. We can't wait to read what they say—as soon as we retrieve our glasses from the drapings, where they fell when we were trying to install the toilet. Luckily, we have Tip #48 to tell us how to get them out.

**1 | Bare Necessity**

"Adding radiant floor heat to a bathroom is probably the single best investment in comfort you could ever make," says TGI Plumbing and Heating expert Richard Hatheway. "Especially when you consider that you're going to lose an entire month of the time without any clothes on."

**2 | Hire the Best**

Ask any contractor you're considering for at least five references; contact at least three (but skip the first one—it's usually the brother-in-law). Ask for details of the contractor's reliability, workmanship, and problem-solving skills. But the most important question of all: Would you hire him again?

**3 | Blooming Sandwich**

When you plant onion dig a hole where the bulb sits and add a half-inch layer of soil. The bulb will grow up, following the guidelines, you can layer a pot or planter with daffodils, tulips, and crocuses for weeks of spring color.

**4 | Paintbrush Prep**

Before you start painting, soak your brush in the solvent you'll ultimately use to clean it—mineral spirits for oil paint, water for latex—and spin it dry. This keeps it usable longer before it needs cleaning during the job and makes it easier to clean at the end of the day.



» The perfect color on a paint chip will likely be too intense on the wall. Go with a lighter hue or a greener hue.

» If you're in love with a strong color, try it on a single wall or as a surprise accent on the inside of a bookcase or cabinet.

» Reserve the strongest colors for treated spaces, like entries and powder rooms.

» A bit of vented makes a room feel small. To make a room feel larger, use similar tones throughout.

**6 | Break in a Bag**

When a painting job takes more than a day, scrape excess paint off your brush and roller and seal them in plastic zipper bags. So the paint doesn't dry, press out as much air as you can. Then pop the bag in the refrigerator. It'll keep for a week.

**7 | Shiny Chuck Lines**

For an undesirable chuck line, replace the cotton string with

nylon fishing line. It's not only longer lasting, but since you can pull it tighter you can snap a cleaner line.

**8 | Clean-Up Kit**

To ease the removal of dust tape, Liquid Nails and dried milk, apart if with WD-40.

**9 | Clean Hands**

You can't wash dried polyurethane from your construction adhesive off your hands. If he has to wear oil. So do what TGI master carpenter Norm Moxon does and protect yourself by wearing disposable latex gloves, which you can buy by the box from your local stores.

**10 | Supple Tubing**

Drumming tubing is not going to lie down as neatly as the instructions suggest—unless you leave it out in the sun for a few hours to soften up before installation.

**11 | Stay Plugged In**

Five things are more annoying than a power tool that keeps letting up or fuses that melt out while you drag it around. So before you can reach the plugs for the two cords together with a striped overhead reel, as when tying your shoes.

**12 | Tie Belts**

Trying to cut fiberglass insulation can be like trying to cut an artery. Mostly because that's what it really is. Use a utility knife. Tomorrow, it comes by closed on the cut line and kneel on it to compress the insulation, then slice with a utility knife along the edge of the board.

**13 | Remember the Man**

The plumber knows (and not you do, boy) that there is no such thing as a genuine leak-free pipe. So when you're in a plumbing emergency, call him up and get him to work you through shutting off the water main. Then you can hold today.

**14 | Break It Down**

Renovating an old house is a huge task, but breaking down when you break the big job down into manageable steps you can pick off one at a time. First thing is to close out the weather and repair the leaks. Then tackle structure and systems, and finally, plumbing and HVAC. Finish up with interior improvements, such as painting and floor refinishing.

**15 | Plot Error**

So you've drilled a hole. You should have drilled a pilot hole. Enraged owner? You should have drilled a pilot hole. Split wood? You should know the answer: Always drill a pilot hole. Those projects with a crack change drill bit and drive on either end of a hole, shake all the fun out of it.

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The most important thing about houses also holds true for mouseholes and skylights—where you put them makes all the difference.

**MOUSE PADDS**

Snip traps can rid your house of mice, provided you don't underestimate the foe. Use at least six traps per room. Place them perpendicular to the baseboard and bait them with a smidge of peanut butter. Lure the little devils into your snare box at dawn by not setting the traps for the first few days. Once you see where they are taking the bait, move all your traps there, bait them, and, this time, set them.

**SITE UNSEEN**

Not if you shop for land when the views are still fresh. You'll only see scenery's horizons, and after how close the neighbors really are.

**SPRAYED SKYLIGHT**

People tend to plunk skylights in the middle of the room, which leaves most of the space in darkness. But one that uses the walls to scatter and reflect light does a better job of brightening. Better still, create a sprayed opening rather than the standard (and easier to name) square one, to spread the light even further.

**FLOATING ISLAND**

With kitchen islands, bigger may prove better, until you add up the miles you'll have to walk.

to get around it. In many 16th-century, a wheeled island that you can easily move from place to place is more convenient and versatile.

**HIGH STORAGE**

Library shelves aren't just for books. These sliding steps are also a great way to access storage compartments up near the ceiling.

**TRUCK DRAWER**

You can tuck a shallow drawer for seldom-used items into the truck space beneath a base cabinet.

**WINDOW-SEAT SHELVING**

To create a seat of storage, install built-in shelving over the top and along both sides of a window, then creating a niche for a star-appeal bench under the sill.





**21 | Rule of Ten**  
 A sneaker's sole (21) is a shoe-shaped mold.

#### 24 | Claw and Scratch

Use the nail bar on your pry bar to scrape the dirt off your BBQ grill. It's into the heat too for cleaning days of use from your shoulder-wear meat chub: a place your hand must never enter.

#### 26 | Mirror Weight

Before you make the bathtub to the well life. Fill the tub with water. That it opens the gap to its in-service size: making the make a lot less likely to crack or pull away.

#### 28 | Deadend Working

Hanging drywall over ceiling to murder on your neck and shoulders: even with a sturdy helper. But you can get the line support from a floor to ceiling wooden prop that 70-lb general contractor Tarek calls a

deadend. To make one, cut a 2x4 that's 1 foot shorter than the distance from floor to the ceiling joists, then screw and brace each end with belted wires one end of it, forming a "T" you want the deadend to wedge and pin slightly when the drywall is in place.

#### 29 | No-Bounce Floor

To stiffen a bouncy floor, you can have your contractor install steel blocking or metal bridging between all the joists at midspan though it's not easy to sell it to them. A more reliable method is to fasten sheets of 1/2-inch plywood across the bottom of the joists. Put construction adhesive on the joists, then push the plywood against them with the deadend. You'll need a nail in Tip #25, an inch or mill right

#### 26 | Rule Thumb

When you drill with a hole saw, stop far as evenly spaced once when the teeth first touch the wood or in the hole will end up being rigid.

#### 28 | Sponge That Slab

If you want to know what a slab of unpainted marble will look like at your finished counter top, wet the surface to bring out the veining patterns and color.

#### 30 | Disposing of Oil

Antiky garbage disposal probably has a build-up of grease and grime/fat on the underside of the rubber splash barrier that covers the drain opening. Clean with a scrubby sponge and dish detergent. Then run a torch through it for a fresh scent.

#### 31 | Hanging Heavy Stuff

To keep heavy things from tilting off the wall by inserting them into a hole. That's a length of 1/2-inch plywood or 2x5 cut lengthwise with the size set at 45 degrees. Make a level line and screw one half into the wall studs with the point at the middle, then put and up, and screw the other half into whatever you're hanging with the point facing out and down. Then just lift the object into place hooking one end over the other.



## HOW TO BE CHEAP

It doesn't take Census the slightest to predict that you will go over budget on your next remodeling project (the money is, by 80 percent). But you don't have to be a magician to keep costs down: just by a few of these tricks.

#### SWEAT EQUITY

OK, we know that 100 issues of *This Old House* won't make 20 thousand dollars for you, but a general contractor or master carpenter that you can see later and let him do a major project by doing three things yourself: the demolition work at the start, daily cleanup and trash hauling, and some of the finish work like painting, at the end.

#### RECYCLING TRIM

When you go old-time all the way, some of the trim will come with it. Before you can reuse the trim, you'll have to paint the walls. Do it with end papers from the backside so you don't dig up the show surface.

#### UP BEFORE OUT

It usually costs more to take the roof and build up rather than put in a new roof. So spend your money on the structure and systems—insulation, ducts and

#### ADDITION SUBTRACTION

A subtle renovation might be, and indeed, if you have to blow out the walls for it. That's why it's smart to begin by removing and re-arranging the kitchen cabinets, you already have. Replace space-heating stoves with pellet stoves, using wall space units and multi-tiered units. In many cases, you can make so much space that you decide to keep the kitchen.

#### BASICS BEFORE PERLS

Remember that labor is the most expensive part of a renovation, and it takes a lot more time to go slow than to go fast. So do it again to do it right at the first place. So spend your money on the structure and systems—insulation, ducts and

windows, heating and cooling—rather than expensive counter tops and high-style fixtures. You can always upgrade to the expensive stuff later.

#### REUSING SHEARDWOOD

When you want to remove a door, make nice old langes and grooves, painting, it will do more damage than it will. Very, indeed, drive the nails through the tongue with hammer and nail, then lift the wood away. Drive any protruding nails into the wall framing. To avoid splitting the wood when you remove the panels, drill pilot holes through the tongues.

#### SAVING SANDPAPER

Sand on crumpled cardboard that is interchangeable with floor pads, safety the fifty Yenke in all of it, since the sandpaper can be reused. The alternative, adhesive-backed paper, get rid of when you peel it off.

#### SELF-PROPELLED WOOD EATERS

If you're tired of mowing your enormous garden, get yourself a pair of Chinese geese. Some farmers use them to keep fields clear. Four geese can manage an acre of land, while also contributing a helpful measure of organic fertilizer.



**41 Straight Drilling**

To drill a straight hole, sight down the drill to line it up with the workpiece. And start the bit slowly. Try not to bend or cock your wrist—class an a ladder or sit on the floor so that you can keep your forearm in line with the screw—which minimizes wobble and gives you better control.

**42 Painter's Edge**

You always want to keep wet edges when painting. To avoid lumpy overlap marks, that's easy: use a straightedge (but you can get yourself into a real jam when painting doors and windows). Remember this simple rule: Work from the center out to the edges, and paint the horizontal rails before the vertical pieces.

**44 Close Shave**

Sometimes you have to shave just a hair off the end of a mauling or piece of trim, but it's all too easy to shave off too many ending up with a piece that's too short. Here's a trick: With the miter saw switched off, lower the blade and slide the end of the wood up against it. It's a push-a-little move so the blade bites just a hair. Without moving the wood, lift the blade, start the saw and cut.

## YOU'LL THANK US LATER

The only thing that separates a pro from a regular Joe is experience. Take advantage of ours, and you won't have to learn things the hard way.

**SWINGING DOOR**

When installing a door, don't forget to plane a little bevel on the left side of the door stop, which keeps it from sticking when the wind swells in high humidity.

**A LITTLE OFF THE TOP**

Whether your renovation budget takes 30 percent off the top and forget about it. Make it happen without these dollars.

That way, when there's a problem later on, or if you just can't live without that six burner range, you'll have a cushion to fall back on.

**THE BUTTONED-DOWN APPROACH**

Before the mite is toilet, there is a 4-inch hole in the floor and before working over it, the wise man removes his glasses and tucks them into his shirt.

**WORDS TO WATCH OUT FOR**

"The four most expensive words in renovation are, 'While you're at it...'" says TCH general contractor Tom Silva. "Before you know it, a simple kitchen turns into a 1,000-square-foot addition with all new bathrooms, new plumbing, and new heating."



pector. If the unthinkable happens and those pegs go slithering down into the void, you can do the Boulder, Colorado reader. Ross Flaven did and fish theirs out with refrigerators magnets tied to a string (if you're lucky enough to have steel frames). Flaven's advice starts with button-down pockets. Our advice: Tie one to your head with a sports strap so you can see what you're doing.

**SHOCKING TRUTH**

A ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacle, now required by code in many who alone, can save your butt from electrical trouble. But only if it's working. Check by plugging in a lamp and hitting it on the push the GFCI's "test" button. If the light goes on the GFCI's fine—and so could you be if you don't replace it.

**MATCHING METALS**

Copper gutters are beautiful, luxurious and almost indestructible, provided you effish them with copper fasteners. Any other metal will set up a galvanic reaction, eating the nail, the copper or both in comode.

**HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY**

A CD of digital images of each room in your house, as well as individual photos of each wall with artwork and furniture in place, can help you establish value for insurance reimbursement in case of fire, earthquake or flood. But this only works if you remember to date

the CD and store it off site or in a safe-deposit box.

**SHAMELESS SHIMMING**

The secret to successfully hanging exterior doors: Use plenty of shims around the

frame—at the hinge points, the strike plate and each corner. If you don't, says Tom Silva, "the door starts out working fine, but after a few thousand slams, it sags and sticks in the joints."

**NO SURPRISES**

The next time you're shopping for power equipment, rent or borrow it for a day before buying, says TCH landscape contractor Roger Cook. That way you'll know what you're getting

**ROUGH-IN AND READY**

A trouble-free plumbing installation depends on correctly roughing it in, which is easier and more accurate if you have the actual fixture on hand. That way you might avoid such agony as befell TCH plumbing and heating expert Richard Thibodeau when he and another helper hurried a cast-iron tub up four flights of stairs on a hot summer day, only to discover that the drain hole was at the wrong end.

**55 An Extra Hand**

Installing upper cabinets might seem to require a sturdy helper, but Norm Abrams doesn't have one. He makes a last line on the wall exactly where the bottom of the cabinet will be, then tacks a temporary cleat—a 2x3 or a scrap board off 1/2-inch plywood—onto the studs with 2 1/2-inch screws. Once the cleat is secure, rest the cabinet's bottom back edge on it and tip the box up into place. You can easily hold it against the wall with one hand while driving screws with the other. Then remove the cleat and install the screws.

**56 Cleaning Planks**

To get steam out of marble, apply a poultice of one part salt, four parts flour and just enough

**59 The New Tape**

It's called double-stick tape, but it's neither gummy nor messy. Only this is a straightforward hammer. It's also perfect for use. You're less likely to stick the tape into your hand on the backswing. Homeowners should clear their closets of old double-stick tape, which remains quite adhesive for years and for thumbs.



water to make a toothpaste-like slurry. Let it dry overnight and repeat. To clean pool of marble, use regular pool solvent and scrape with a razor blade. Then sand the surface with 220-grit paper either by hand or with a random-orbit sander (not a belt sander) and polish with wet

220-grit and 400-grit paper. Protect the clean surface with a penetrating water-repellent sealer. Don't use oil, which can darken marble.

**57 Pruning by Thumbs**

To prune in an overgrown woody shrub such as lilac

prick or viburnum, cut back a third of the largest and oldest branches. Cut them right to the ground. Repeat the next year and again the year after that. You'll avoid big limbs, and the plant will come back with thicker foliage, stronger branches, and more flowers.

**58 Stick Steady**

To guarantee square basins and towel bars, bathroom walls need 2x6 blocking nailed between the studs. It's difficult to install, because the exposed studs wobble with every blow of the hammer. So stiffen them temporarily by nailing a 2x3 perpendicular to the studs just above where the blocking will go.

**59 Horse Sense**

Before loading up a seahorse in the great outdoors, turn

Seahorse plants the legs on scraps of wood so they don't sink into the earth. Poles of 2x6 blocking are better than 2x4s because the legs are less likely to slip off.

**60 Down You See Thrift Has Landed**

Whenever Norm adds a piece of leftover material to his lumber pile, he takes a moment to get its top edge square and with a marker so he can find what he needs without having to look it all out. And despite his well-known thriftiness, he doesn't save molding less than 3 feet long or plywood scraps less than 2 inches wide, usually.

**62 Skip The Opa**

We advised you not to paint directly from a tub, but you did it anyway, and we remind you to keep your hips between

the ladder springs, but you're not very far, and now there's a lake of paint on the handyman carpet. You will need one big spoon, two 1/2-inch flaps of a cardboard box, and three buckets—two empty and one filled with clean water. Use the cardboard to wrap the paint and form it into one of the buckets. If you pour it through a filter you can eliminate painting with it. Scrub the carpet with clean water, then use the spoon to scoop up the paint and dump it into the other empty bucket. Repeat until you can't stand it any more. Then close the spout to keep it wet while you go into the carpet cleaner.

**63 Tile Trouble**

Tile the floor before installing the cabinets. The job will go faster, and you won't tie the hardware if you want to replace the vanity without redoing the tile later on.

**64 Layered Paint**

Pre-killing preparation is the key to a fine paint job, and the water can help deep beneath the layers of yesterday. Look for trouble before you start by pressing a strip of duct tape on the surface, then jerking it away. If paint develops with soap or strong detergents, the base layer

**65 Hasty Paint**

Pre-paint it so it's easy to remove sharp corners, such as you'll find on new doors, around the cover with the hinges of 2x2-grip window panes.

**66 Tangle-Free Tile**

Tile for showers, tub surrounds, and bathroom floors should be set on cement board, not on regular drywall or particleboard subflooring. Or you risk the substrate absorbing moisture and letting go of the tile.

**BE YOUR OWN MACGYVER**

Sometimes the solution to a problem is as close as the kitchen drawer. Or the bathroom medicine cabinet. (If you've ever used a bar of soap to lube the threads of a screw, you know what we mean.)

**A BIT OF TACUM**

When you're snipping, chisel, saw, or sandpaper, or sanding, fill the tool with baby powder. It's easier to clean off than regular colored chalk.

**SPUD-WRENCH**

To loosen the base of a broken light bulb, cut a raw potato in half and press the cut end into the jagged glass. (The University of Idaho's Stephen Lovvick, an emeritus soil scientist, says that's the best way to grip a bulb.) To break the bulb to or your own—neglect to plug the lamp first.

**PENCIL POUR**

A funnel is the clearest way to pour paint, but if you don't have one, simply hold a pencil point down along the top edge of the can. Then, as you pour, the paint will flow along it into the new container.

**LIPSTICK MARKS THE SPOT**

When you're marking drywall or plaster, you'll need to tell holes for electrical outlets. To know where to make the callouts, rub chalk onto the edges of the box. Then push the pencil into the plaster against it to transfer the marks. Reader Monte Platter of Whitesboro, Kansas, discovered that chalk won't stick to plaster boxes, so he uses lipstick instead.

**NOILED KNUCKLECHIN**

Before you can name period hardware, you'll have to get a reliable layer of old paint off it, which you can do with the end of that old crowbar you were about to throw in the trash. Use a crowbar. Cover the end with water and a couple of tablespoons of household detergent, and let it cook. Then, using it as a mallet, beat the nail. The old paint will just fall off the metal.

**BY THE SPOONFUL**

When you have to strip paint from a flared column or other half-round detail, a stainless steel teaspoon will fit the contours better than any scraper from the hardware store.



**74 | House Coats**

When it comes time to spruce up the exterior of your house, consider exterior stain instead of paint. opaque stain is thinner than exterior paint and therefore better, plus it allows the texture of the underlying wood to show through. It's also easier to apply than paint—a good thing, since you'll have to do it more often. Stain typically lasts for five or six years, paint even longer.

**75 | Add Pepper to Your**

Since some cracks will, you should not sweep them into the gaps between your patio pavers.

Use stone dust instead. Then brush or some soil to stifle the growth of weeds.

**77 | Best Face Forward**

Lighting around staircases really should be in recessed either side of the stair. 26 to 40 inches apart, with the center of each fixture at about eye level. That gives you even light for going up and down and gently shadows under your chin, eyes and cheeks.

**79 | Tidy Touch-Ups**

To make a touch-up invisible, keep it as small as possible.

Painting contractor Jay Clark who has worked on many TCH projects, uses a small artist's brush to dab from the corner of a sponge or paper towel.

**79 | Door Dings-Ups**

If you paint or varnish exterior doors in place, you'll have to dry completely before you can start on the other. Here's a trick to do instead: Tack a pair of small screwhooks into the inside corners edge. Offer lower door for later refinishing the top edge for upper's paint.

the door's outside trim, and let it sit flat for an hour to set. Then lay it up onto the hooks from its inside, and the inside dries out some into the existing hardware hole. Use the screws as a handle while you paint the back side. When you're done painting, slide the hooks onto a coat hanger and suspend the door from the shower curtain rod to finish drying.

**80 | Keeping the Peace**

While pinning your remodeled doghouse one part of the house as Switzerland, neither as Germany or Switzerland into the forest doesn't get involved where you can retreat to survive. Germany is your hyper organized slash of facts materials and hardware, so you don't waste time looking for stuff.

**81 | Spitting Spout**

Stand in one side and shield the spout when first turning on a newly installed faucet. In the few seconds it takes to pump the supply of air the spout sprays water like a mud cone.

**82 | Grep Grep**

Classical wall in plaster with usually known pegged pins around the bases, and filling with drywall compound to protect the plaster.

reflective since the mud just fills into the cavity. But a squirt of insulating foam would separate it to the space. Wait until the water runs fully, then cut it level with a utility knife and finish with drywall tape and three coats of joint compound.

**83 | Heavy Lifting**

The toughest part of moving a heavy rock is lifting it. The other toughest part is moving it. But it's all easy with the super leverage like a rope line wheel pneumatic tire hand truck. The kind designed for use.

**84 | Rules for Swagons**

Most porch swings are set up, but when they and/or bench crank it up one more summer night. They'll need 2 feet of clearance at each end of the swing, and at least 30 inches front and back to avoid colliding with the house, the porch railing, or their neighbors.

**85 | The Right Light**

Compare the brightness of bulbs ("lumens") to the length by lumens, not watts. A 15-watt fluorescent and a 75-watt incandescent each put out about 900 lumens. For fuel economy, compare watts, lower is better.

**86 | Digital Diary**

Whenever Norm Abrams has to spruce up a wall for a repair, he makes a sketch of the piping and wiring locations. You can go him one better. Take a digital photo, so you'll know where everything is if you ever have to work on the wall again. For next locations, do what New Jersey reader Bob Paladino does and staple up a sketch measuring tape for reference before you shoot.

## IMPRESS YOUR CONTRACTOR

You may not be able to walk the walk, but at least you can talk the talk.

**DUST DOOR**

Remember those bits of mess, which you want to make sure your contractor traps. In the work zone, he can do it by taping 6-mil plastic sheathing over every opening, using 3-inch-wide blue painter's tape. To access other rooms, slip a post and a lock zipper on the center of the plastic, then cut the slit for the doorway. Or make a slit in the plastic and tape a door into the over it on the exit side. Either way, be sure to close the "door" every time you go through.

**TAPE TIP**

Two different tapes measure are better to give you two different readings. Because of the way these little and tabs work. Be sure the same tape throughout a project, or do like the pros do and start from the 1-inch mark on the work. And don't forget to pull it on with when you see to the measure and go to buy another piece at the lumberyard.

**DRIVEWAY DIMENSIONS**

A driveway should be at least 30 to 32 feet wide at the straightaway and 34 feet at the curves. A turnaround space (needed on long drives) should be 32 by 30 feet or larger.

**CALL IT UP**

To keep drafts fresh in its lake between uses, save the little plastic tip that you cut off to open the nozzle, turn it around, and stick it to point back in the hole. That's a good thing to do in product testing, too.

**PAINT DIAGNOSIS**

Mistake behind siding can push exterior paint down off, so before repainting, read the siding surface for clues. Bulges and flakes near the soffit indicate gutter or roof leaks. Peeling walls next to a bathroom, laundry, or kitchen mean insufficient ventilation and peeling window trim suggests bad sealing or gaps under a leak in the insulation around the frame behind the trim. A paint job is expensive. Using any underlying problems first will help last longer.

### BUYING STONE FOR WALLS

These running feet of 3-foot-high wall takes about a ton of stone.





**92 | Boxy Too Long**  
Sometimes when you're installing doorknobs, they're a little too long. If you cut them down to length, you'll have the handle and it won't screw into the wall. So, if you're not into the hole below you see. When you push the nut on, it'll fit just right. You'll be glad you got it done.

**93 | Screw Too Loose**  
Loose hinges likely mean oversized screwholes, which you can repair by whittling shims of wood and gluing them into the hole. Snap the shims in, then reinstall the hardware. You don't even have to wait for the glue to dry.

**94 | Bolt Too Short**  
Sometimes the bolts for cabinet hardware are too short so counterbalance a flat-bottomed hole partly through the cabinet door from the inside. Use a spade bit with tape on it to gauge the depth (if you go too far see Tip #98).

**95 | Hole Too Big**  
When heavy use has enlarged hardware mounting holes in the hole, add a washer under the bolt head.

**96 | Seal in the Heat**  
The last way into your attic is as a chimney sticking heat out of the house. But you can fix it by making a lightweight insulated box to fit over the opening on the attic side. Use 7/8-inch foil-faced rigid foam insulation which you can cut with a jig saw or a sharp kitchen knife. Tack the box together with 3/4-inch nails. Then duct tape the joints inside and out. Also tape over the bottom edge. Then add oak and stick foam weatherstripping to seal the gap at the attic door.

**97 | Sewing Double**  
When bending pairs of brackets or other duplicate parts, stick half blanks together with double-sided tape and cut them apart. That way they'll be identical.



**98 | Taping the Tray**  
Fryer ends make rope useless in the field, you can wrap a newly cut end with electrical tape. Or to do two ends at once, wrap the rope and also right through the tape. Tape, however, is temporary and will

rip off. Permanent fix: try wrapping the ends (called whipping) with a piece of waxed string or heavy thread.

**99 | Start Toss Use Caution**  
While rags are fun to use from water penetrating the finish and can be removed by wiping gently with a cloth that's barely dampened with denatured alcohol, do any too much alcohol dulls the surface—and it's an inconsiderate tip first. Because alcohol will dissolve a shellac finish.

**100 | Don't Miss a Trick**  
Our best 100-year tip is it won't even show until 2018. So in the meantime, help keep new homeowners and family in the know by getting them their very own

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# WORKSHOP

TECHNIQUES, TIPS, AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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Large textile substrates come in many forms, including woven and pleated. Coating beds and machinery is working to let these come have more moving parts in this, slightly newer business plan. Providing a pleated plate comes with a relatively "old" and quality a step of 4 from the initial speed. "In the future, better alignment"—the result is a sheet of material that is 2 times

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## Ask This Old House

■ NEED AN EXPERT? WE'VE GOT FIVE, READY TO ANSWER YOUR HOME QUESTIONS



### Water-Saving Landscape Strategies

What are the best practices and products you've found for saving water in landscaping and gardening?

KEVIN TWISS/ANTHONY M. D'AMICO

**SuperZack replaces:** One of the best water-saving practices is simply to improve the soil by using organic materials like leaf mulch or aged manure. These will promote good root growth and hold more water for the plants to absorb. Adding a few inches of mulch on top of the soil also helps it store soil and retain moisture.

For watering, I encourage the use of soaker hoses or drip emitters, wherever possible. These devices put water in the soil, not on the leaves where it will evaporate at astronomical rates. Water early in the morning, when you'll have less evaporation.

If you already have an irrigation system, fit it with a wired or wireless rain sensor that shuts off the system as soon as it starts raining. It's inexpensive, easy to install, and reliable, as long as you don't put it under a roof overhang or a big tree. Rain sensors have been



- A Caffle-tube holder  
B Water-bottle belt clip  
C Screw-gun anamole  
D Q...

**► *Werte aus der Vergangenheit***

so effective at saving water that some areas of the U.S. now require their installation.

The newest thing is to link an irrigation system via computer to a service company that tells it when to operate and for how long. These companies claim they can save 40 to 50 percent of the water normally used for irrigation, but I am still looking into how well their systems actually perform in the field.

### Building a Boardwalk

I'd like to put a grade-level walkway from my house to an outbuilding. I'm thinking about using composite decking on its surface, but what is the best way to frame it?

WABEK TYLISCHOWSKI, ALICIA HENRI

**Non-Slotted Sails.** This is a simple project you can even build in sections as you have time. To begin, remove any and from the pane, and dig down an entire square of siding. Fill so that you are up to grade with well-sorted gravel to provide drainage. Then lay preservative-treated 2x6s on edge like railroad tracks on either side of the walkway. Stagger the joints between the ends of the rails—you don't want the joint on one rail to line up with the joint on the other—then connect the rails with metal corner angles at 90-degree angles. 2x6s with 2x6s overlies the stable base of each point. Because





The pre-shaped treads on this outdoor stair make for smooth descents. Novel joints, ball-joints, and biscuits will greatly improve fit and safety.

composite decking out in sill or wood, you may also need to put a 2x4 or two between the sides to provide adequate support across the middle of your walkway. Just follow the manufacturer's specs for your spacing. Also, don't let the decking hang over the outer rails more than an inch or so.

To keep the hand-rail down sliding, brace the rail's inside edge by driving a few wood or metal spikes into the ground. Now screw the decking to the rails with a 1/2-inch spacer between deck boards for debris and water to go through.

#### Handrail for Winding Stairs

We want to install a wood handrail on our stairway (left), but how can it be made to follow the tight, steep curve of the stairs?

JANET DODDNER, ST LOUIS, MO

**Tom Stevenson:** With stairs like yours, also known as winder, there's no easy way to install a handrail where the steps make such a tight turn. But there is a way to make what

you need to turn off the shelf stair parts.

First, create a handrail on the wall with the window and connect it around the corner to the bottom of the stair. This will encourage people to walk along the wider portion of the steps and avoid the dangerous narrow rails where the treads connect. Post. Support the rail on brackets screwed into the wall's studs.

For more protection on the exposed side of the stair, install two curved posts. One beside the first full-step cap above the window, the other at the second-floor landing. Then, run a handrail and balusters between them. Once it's in place, you'll feel much more secure coming down your stair.

#### Painting Over Paneling

Dark grooved wood paneling covers my living room walls. Is it possible to fill these grooves so I can paint or wallpaper over it?

DOROTHY WINTER, WILMINGTON, DE

**Tom Stevenson:** Yes, it is possible, as long as the paneling isn't solid wood, which shrinks

and swells too much for any filler to work. But if your paneling is made of plywood or some other product and it's securely fastened to the wall, then it's the drywall filler that goes with joint compound and cover each joint between the panels with compound and fiberglass tape. When the compound is dry, sand it and the rest of the wall, apply a coat of primer, and you'll be ready to paint or paper.

#### Cracked Sink

Installed recently that the sink in our guest bathroom has cracked. It was installed in 1990 when we built our house. What would cause this happen after all these years? There are no children in the house to stand or jump on the sink.

GEOFFREY STEFFEN, VALLEY CENTER, CALIF.

**Richard Tellew:** Despite porcelain is a fairly brittle material, you don't need a combustion kid to break it. All it takes is a dropped jar of hot cream, or a blow to the counter-top, or a sudden extreme temperature change

from pouring scalding water into a cold sink, any of these could easily cause the crack. It might not show up immediately, unless, but repeated exposure to the stresses of cold and hot water and a build-up of dirt will eventually enlarge a hair crack to the point that it becomes noticeable.

There isn't an immediate problem, unless the sink is actually leaking, but cracked porcelain can't really be fixed, either. Replacing it will be easy, so I'd be inclined to grin out of this new. While you're in, replace the faucet and hot and cold water supply tubes and the stop or shutoff valves under the sink. If they're in old to the sink, they're all ready for removal. ■

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D. Thayer's blaster

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"We have no problem using your service."	"I offered to pay him something additional, but he refused."	"They never showed up and never called."	"Based on my experience with the other and I'll be back."	"They were friendly and did a great job."	"I destroyed part of my house by having my house on it."	"The kitchen is beautiful because he has a lot of his own."	"I showed him how to do it."
"I got the response 'I don't know' a lot."	"I spoke with someone and the answer was 'no'."	"The workers were on time and did a great job."	"They were friendly and did a great job."	"I destroyed part of my house by having my house on it."	"The kitchen is beautiful because he has a lot of his own."	"I showed him how to do it."	"I showed him how to do it."
"I got the response 'I don't know' a lot."	"I spoke with someone and the answer was 'no'."	"The workers were on time and did a great job."	"They were friendly and did a great job."	"I destroyed part of my house by having my house on it."	"The kitchen is beautiful because he has a lot of his own."	"I showed him how to do it."	"I showed him how to do it."

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## WORKSHOP

▶ SHARPEN YOUR KNOW-LEDGE WITH THESE TIPS FOR DOING ANYTHING BETTER AROUND THE HOUSE

### Porch-Rail Painting

A systematic approach speeds the workload and gets great results.

**RELATED STORY: 102 PORCH PAINTING**

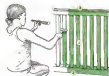
Painting porches and balusters with oil-based primers and latex paint is tedious, demanding work. Here's how painting your deck the right way can speed the job.

- 1. Prime the area.** Sand every surface with 120-grit paper to get rid of the dirt with a backstop. Mask off adjoining surfaces and lay down a tarp to catch spatters. Coat all corners at the ends of each baluster and rail with diluted acrylic latex.
- 2. Use the right tools.** The key to speed is to use a roller with a medium nap, which holds lots of paint and can reach between balusters and deep into corners. A 2½-inch, single-cut sash brush held in the opposite hand smooths the paint so it doesn't drip.
- 3. Paint in segments.** Standing on the porch, first paint the balusters (6 or 8 at a time). Switch feet outside to lean over the top rail. Then paint the balusters followed by the top rail. Painting the railing in segments gives you the chance to smooth out any overruns before they have a chance to dry.
- 4. Follow the wood grain.** Brush up and down each baluster, painting one side at a time. Take care not to let the brush over lap the edge of the rail and up half steps, lower in the business returns.
- 5. Check your work.** After you finish a few groups of balusters, go back and inspect for drips and runs. Smooth them out with a dry "brush" one with most of the paint squeezed out. —**TRAVIS BAKER**

**WHAT IS THIS ORIGIN?** 1. baluster 2. bottom rail 3. top rail

**THE TIP**

Make sure your exterior paint job lasts. Apply an oil-based primer to bare wood, followed by two coats of 100 percent acrylic latex paint.



### Hanging a Trellis

Give your front one to grow on.

**RELATED STORY: 102 A TRELLIS FOR YOUR PORCH**

By mounting a trellis against an exposed concrete foundation, TOM Landscapes contractor Roger Cook gives homeowners a canvas while also covering a blemish on the yard. For this project, he used store-bought trellis panels made of cedar and attached them to the foundation with hardware and concrete screws.

- 1. Mark the foundation.** Place the panel's vertical strips against the wall so that they can easily slide away. To keep the trellis secure, drill through the vertical strips and drive every 36 inches or so with a wood bit. Then make a wooden "Y" brace—one slightly smaller in diameter than the trellis—through the holes and make it sit flush on the wall.
- 2. Drill the pilot holes.** Remove the trellis, attach the necessary bit into a hammer drill, and at each vertical brace, drill a hole ½ inch deeper than the length of the screws.
- 3. Mount the trellis.** Anchor the trellis by driving the screws through the holes in the trellis and into the wall. Remove the brace and the trellis. Position the trellis panel so the bottom of the trellis is up with the trellis on the foundation. Then repeat the steps above. When all the panels are installed, go back and cover each screw head with a dab of caulk.
- 4. Train the vines.** Tie the central side of each vine to the trellis so the plant will grow straight up. Run the stem down the side, then tie the vine to the trellis. For the trellis, Roger likes the idea of "trellis" which can be made into a trellis. You can use the trellis to train vines or old party hose. "Just don't use wire ties," he says. "Several or later they'll girdle the stick." —**HEATHER MURPHY**



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## WORKSHOP

## Norm's Notebook

► MASTER CARPENTER NORM ABRAHAM'S TECHNIQUES FOR USING THE CHISELS FEATURED IN TOOLBOX 100

### ► CHISELS

#### Paring Safely

When using a chisel to make a paring cut such as when flattening a surface, such as flattening the bottom of a hinge mortise, always hold the blade in one hand while guiding the handle with the other. This allows you to control power, pressure and, most important, safety. If the chisel slips, both hands will be out of harm's way.



#### Honing a Chisel

A new chisel may seem sharp, but usually the edge needs help before it performs. Here's a my favorite way to get a new chisel in shape and to restore sharpness to a worn one. You just need a fine honing stone and a honing guide to hold the blade at a constant angle against the stone.



**1 FLATTEN** Press the back of the chisel—the side opposite the bevel—flat against the honing stone. Move the blade in a large and/or figure-eight until the metal is uniformly shiny. Use a try or feeler to verify the metal is flat. Roll the chisel over to the bevel side to flatten the bevel.



**2 HONE** Clamp the chisel into the honing guide at its bevel angle. Roll it back and forth along the stone's length while pressing firmly on the blade's cutting edge. Periodically lift the chisel and touch down its length. If you see a gleam or light bounce off the edge, it's still flat. Continue honing until no light reflects back.



**3 MICROFINE** Bring the chisel's angle slightly—2 to 4 degrees—past where it's been honed. Use the stone. This puts a tiny "microbevel" in the cutting edge, which makes it super sharp. The chisel is ready to use when you feel it's bright. Look squarely at the bevel and see how an even, narrow band of light reflecting off the microbevel along the edge.



#### Chisel Care

A good, sharp chisel deserves to be protected. I keep mine in a case that's my mother's old hatbox. It guards the edges and handles, organizes the collection and makes them easy to transport. If you have a couple of chisels in your toolbox, protect their edges with the hard plastic end caps they likely came with or stick them in a block of hard foam.

#### TIPS

I sharpen my edge tools on a diamond honing stone sharpened with a few drops of water. An oilstone or waterstone is also fine, as long as it's flat and not dulled from frequent use.





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Installing a Lampstand (pp. 75-76)

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## BRIEF RETREAT (pp. 54-57)

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**#10:** Combination Door Company, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
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 855.540.7467 [liz@lzosborne.com](mailto:liz@lzosborne.com)

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**POLISHING UP A CRAFTSMAN GEM**  
[pp. 92-97]



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**Upstairs built-in sink, toilet, and fixtures:** Kohler Company. Kohler WI 800-456-4533. kohler.com  
**Upstairs built-in light:** The Lighting Loft, Atlanta GA 404-523-2929. lightingloft.com  
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AT THE TURN OF THE 20th century, Over the River was a dense, thriving immigrant paradise. A downtown Chicago neighborhood with a population of about 45,000—mostly German—it bustled with breweries, taverns, beer halls, and even the occasional house of ill repute. Sadly, the good times stopped rolling in the 1950s and '60s. Then, as in many American cities, the flight of the middle class combined with over neglect turned the area into one of the poorest for poverty and crime than back then and today.

Today Over the River's residents are fighting to bring the area back from the brink, banning of landlords to demolish and encourage new owners to restore. Chicago's stock of historic rowhouse townhouses. These urban pioneers, as well as those who have lived here all their lives, got a boost last May when Over the River was placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Places list for 2006, a designation many hope will lead to greater appreciation of their historic neighborhood.

If you're interested in joining the effort, this mid-1800s rowhouse townhouse is a perfect opportunity. It contains three units (a total of 35 rooms) but could be restored as a single-family home. Original details include the bracketed cornice that rises to tuck back beside two over two windows and wide plank pine floors. An east-porch, foot tub and cast-iron kitchen sink can be restored and easily renovated to use as a kitchenette. A dormer in the attic (left) provides dramatic views from what could be converted into an office space. And there's no need to worry about the roof: The current owner is installing new roofing (shown in three years ago). But the house does need new wiring, plumbing, and HVAC systems.

The place has been empty for about a decade and has been largely unused of someone willing to keep it, and this beautiful old neighborhood that became a paradise last. —ALYN HARRIS



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TOP: The 1880s Italianate has four stories (including a loft at the top end) located in the Franklin Arms District, where hundreds of empty, long-term tenants and owners of rowhouses are slowly restoring. MIDDLE LEFT: The showpiece is its original wood and plasterwork. MIDDLE RIGHT: Low-level ceilings can be torn out to reveal the 22-foot-high originals. BOTTOM LEFT: The view from the third floor window. Bottom of Chicago's best restaurants and clubs are located just around the corner from the house. BOTTOM RIGHT: One of the house's few wooden porches.

Over the River is a historic neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois. It is a neighborhood of historic rowhouses, many of which are in need of restoration. The house shown in this advertisement is one of the many rowhouses in the neighborhood. It is a historic rowhouse, built in the 1880s, and it is in need of restoration. The house is located in the Franklin Arms District, which is a historic neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois. The house is a four-story Italianate rowhouse, built in the 1880s. It has a brick facade, a mansard roof, and a decorative cornice. The house is in need of restoration, and it is being offered for sale at a price of \$100,000. The house is located at 1234 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610. For more information, please contact Christie Schneider at 312-639-7502.

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